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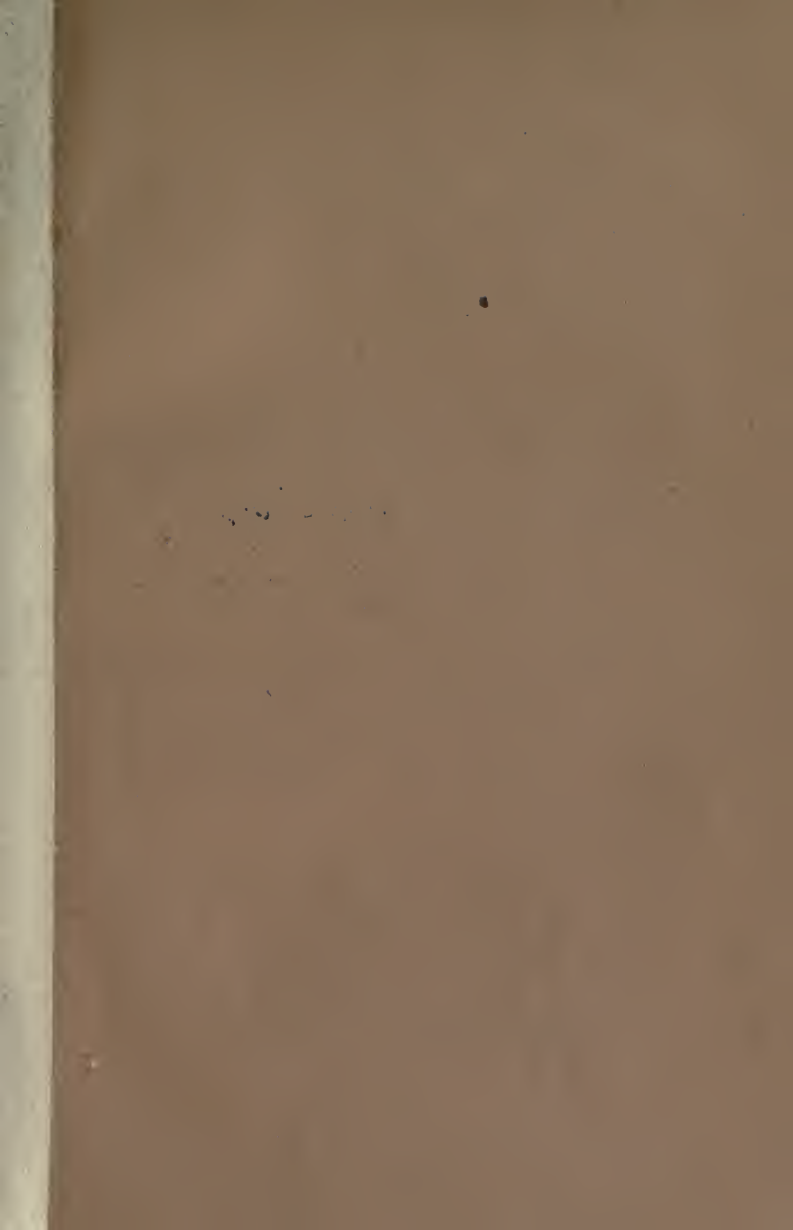
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Tolstoy

BY

COUNT LEO TOLSTOÏ

AUTHOR OF "THE KREUTZER SONATA"

AND

TIMOTHY BONDAREFF

CHICAGO.

CHARLES H. SERGEL & CO

318 DEARBORN ST.

TOIL

LEO TOLSTOI AND TIMOTHY BONDAREFF

TOIL

In the sweat of thy face thou
shalt knead thy bread.

GEN. III: 19.

Translated from the Russian by

B. TSEYTLINE AND A. PAGES

And from the French by

JAMES F. ALVORD



CHICAGO

CHARLES H. SERGEL & CO.

Handwritten text, possibly "L. H. Serger" or similar, in cursive script.

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TOIL

INTRODUCTION

How *Toil* was composed.

The peasant Bondareff, inspirer of Tolstoi's social theories. The two laws of humanity: Manual labor is the law of men; child-bearing is the law of women. Criticism of Bondareff by Tolstoi. The Bible and the Gospel.

How one must interpret the theory of manual labor. Toil on the land, a social remedy. Extent and consequences of this theory. Bondareff's book. Remarks upon the translation.

Toil is the work of Count Leo Tolstoi and the peasant, Timothy Bondareff. But it has had no joint work, properly speaking. This book is composed, in fact, of two different studies which are, as it were, the two different parts of one single book, one by Leo Tolstoi, entitled *Toil and Bondareff's Theory*, and serves as a preface to the essay of the latter; the other by Bondareff which is called *Toil, by the peasant Bondareff*, and which contains three main chapters, which we have named:

I. Introduction. Life of Bondareff. Aim of his work.

II. Toil, according to the Bible.

III. Appendices. Love and Toil. Bondareff's Will.

Bondareff is a peasant of the district of Manoussinsk. He belongs to that class of country people, numerous in Russia, who seek truth in the sacred writings. But while most know only the Gospels, Bondareff, who belongs to the sect of *Sabbatists*, reads little but the Old Testament. Hardly knowing how to spell, he has studied out each verse painfully, and from the beginning he believed he had found the solution of all social questions. He has found formulated in Genesis the fundamental law of man, the obligation to manual labor. Persuaded that redemption cannot be found but by labor, he learned to write in order to disclose what he considered the truth of truths. At the age of sixty-five years, he set himself to composing a work in which, in the form of Bible verses, he undertakes to show that toil on the land is *the* toil, par excellence. This labor overcomes all the difficulties that come to him from his ignorance and his great age. Working by day in the field, and by night on his book, he accomplishes at the end of many years the project he had formed. But the manuscript which he sends to the czar, under the form of a request, is rejected; the censorship does not even authorize its printing.

Under these circumstances, about 1885, Bondareff was presented to Tolstoi, whose fame was already great among the peasants. Struck by the profundity and the truth of the peasant's theories, the author of "My Re-

ligion" actually introduced into his life the reform that Bondareff preached; he set himself to following the plow, to using the awl, in short to toiling with his hands. Until then he had caught a glimpse of, rather than professed, these reforms.* The truth, which he had suspected, did not appear to him in all its might until Bondareff had communicated to him his manuscript. It was then that he developed, modifying them and giving them wider scope and deeper meaning, the leading views of Bondareff in his splendid work "What is My Life" (whose true title is, "What Must We Do Then") and in "What to Do," which is the answer to the former book and forms with it only one single work.† But in 1888, to show that the ideas of which he had made himself the apostle were not the dreams of a fanatic, the imaginations of a mind paradoxical and blasé he published in the ‡ "Russkoye Bogatsvo" •Bondareff's

* Read in "War and Peace" the reflections of Bezouchoff and Levin; consult, also, "Anna Karenina" and "My Confession."

† Tolstoi was familiar with Bondareff's work before writing "What is My Life" and "What to Do." Besides the many points of contact easily established between the two doctrines, which we shall point out further on, here is a passage from "What is My Life," where Tolstoi clearly alludes to Bondareff: "Money," says Tolstoi, "is slavery still, the aim and the results are the same. Its aim is to free man from the 'primordial law,' as a popular writer calls it, or the 'natural law of life,' as we call it. This law prescribes to each of us personal toil as the means of existence." The "popular writer" of whom Tolstoi speaks is none other than Bondareff, who, as we will see, bases toil on the primitive or primordial law, 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread'

‡ "Russian Wealth," a magazine under the direction of M. Obolenski.

work whose publication the censorship had at first forbidden. On this occasion he wrote a profound essay on Toil and Bondareff's theory. It is this essay that we publish to-day, following it with Bondareff's work.

The chief reason why we present a translation of *Toil* is that this work awakens great interest not only in relation to the history of Tolstoi's thought, but in relation to the understanding of the reform that it preaches. In short, Bondareff's book gives us the work, simple but profound, of an illiterate peasant who stammeringly spoke, in 1881, of the grand reform, of which Tolstoi later made himself the champion and the herald.

I

Between the teaching of the peasant Bondareff and that of the nobleman, Leo Tolstoi, the resemblance is great, and these manifold resemblances point very probably to a borrowing direct. Tolstoi, we have said, knew Bondareff; he questioned him on toil, imagined to be the social remedy, he read his work; he even published it at his own expense. Bondareff then has been, in some measure, the inspirer of Tolstoi's social theories, as the secretary Soutaief has been the inspirer of his religious theories. §

In fact, if we open Tolstoi's last philosophical work "What to Do," we will find there set forth Tolstoi's ideas on social reform.

§ On the relations between Tolstoi-ism and Soutaief-ism read the masterly essay in the "Revue des Deux-Mondes" of Sept. 15, 1888, by M. Anatole Leroy.—Beaulien.

Every man ought, by the labor of his own hands, to support himself and family; every woman ought to bring forth children and raise them herself. To man, as the Old Testament says, God has given the law of manual labor, to woman that of child-bearing. To violate these laws is to incur the penalty of death. But while, for man, disobedience to the law which is peculiarly his would be followed by death in the near future, for woman the penalty does not come till later. The violation of these laws would lead directly to the annihilation of mankind.

Now, for a long time, men have violated, for the most part, the law that concerns them. For a long time certain classes have oppressed others, and the violation of the law has, in our days, reached madness even. Do we not see Renan and others dreaming that some day machines will do all the work while men will be nothing more than "bundles of nerves of enjoyment." As to the violation of the law that concerns women, that is luckily quite rare. Prostitution and abortion are the two ways of infringing it.

In substance, while men transgress their law women ordinarily observe theirs. So women, according to Tolstoi, are stronger than men, and it is through them that men can dream of returning to the fulfilment of the primitive law. Only the mother who will regard child-birth as a disagreeable accident, and will find the meaning of life in the pleasures of love, luxury, learning, and social relations, only she, says Tolstoi, will bring up her children in false ideas and will teach them to rid themselves

of toil by usurping that of others. The true mother will teach them on the contrary to perform the toil necessary to life.

These ideas may be compared with those which Bondareff sets forth from the first paragraphs of "Toil According to the Bible." Bondareff interpreting the story of Genesis shows us that Adam was punished for having eaten forbidden fruit, that is, "usurped the labor of another." He was condemned to seek his sustenance by the sweat of his brow; to "knead his bread," * to use Bondareff's expression.

It is by manual labor and especially agricultural labor, and not by the merits of Christ, the sacraments or any other virtues, that Adam was able to save himself from hell. His descendants inherited not only original sin, but also this obligation to labor for their redemption. The penance inflicted on Adam by Jehovah is not at all allegorical. In like manner the penance inflicted on Eve: "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth" ought to be taken in its proper meaning. So then, on the one hand, man ought to gain by the labor of his hands, the bread needed for his subsistence and also for that of his wife and his children; on the other hand, woman ought to perform the duties of child-bearing. Neither one can get free from his respective obligations either by means of money or by any other means whatever.

In reality, then, it is from "Toil according to the Old Testament" that Tolstoi has drawn the idea which he

* It will be seen how this way of interpreting the Bible may be justified.

has for the first time fully presented in "What is My Life" and "What to Do." But while the Jew, Bondareff, assumes that the law of toil and the law of child-bearing are the effects of the divine curse, Tolstoi protests vehemently against such a conception. It is really what we find in the verses of Genesis cited by Bondareff, and on which he bases his whole theory. The God of the Old Testament says to Adam: "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread" and to Eve: "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth."* But according to Tolstoi it is an error to believe that labor is a curse, and it is this error which, of itself has led men to free themselves from the different forms of manual labor, that is, to usurp the labor of others. Tolstoi unceasingly proclaims labor to be, not the sorrow but the joy of life. Neither is child-bearing a curse. It is not only an imperative and sacred duty; it is also a joy, a satisfaction to the whole being.

Tolstoi, then, comes to Bondareff's conclusions from a different starting point. For, to speak truly, Tolstoi opposes the Gospel to the Old Testament. He claims even to draw from the Christian precept of charity and love the law of manual labor—"because, in truth," as he says so eloquently in *Toil*, "the man who professes not by words but by deed the doctrine of the truth (that is, the true doctrine, *par excellence*,) and of love cannot deceive himself as to the end toward which his activity should

* It is to be noticed that the Talmud, also law, teaches that every man ought to have a trade, and the Sanhedrim declares that the Mosaic religion ordains manual labor.

er can the man for whom the meaning of life
 there brings himself to the point of belief
 is those who are dying of hunger and who
 codes of law, casting cannon, working on
 earth, or by playing the violin or the piano
 to be so mad?"

strong form, yet Bend Sinclaire and Tolson con-
 ce again, and perhaps in motion that plays
 it only the duty of man, that is, besides, the
 and remedy, the most efficacious agent of war
 Sinclaire has shown Tolson how full labor
 calls on expressing "hard labor" is the
 it, to which all men ought to apply them-
 which all men ought to live. Other ac-
 should not be performed till one has died
 at least every day. In short, as a general
 right to hard labor, death, being and the
 through the very others, without need of

is clear to Sinclaire as well as to Tolson
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 the country's rather increase the dignity
 of the mind. Accordingly, Tolson does not
 and neither on the present Sinclaire partic-
 line him. If a comparison were made again
 that on "De" and "Lo" it will be seen that
 will about the same. However, as Sinclaire

the "unemployment" keeps all the
 it is still true that he found the first
 backings in the present's hand. And as it

tend. Never can the man for whom the meaning of life service of others deceive himself to the point of believing he serves those who are dying of hunger and of cold by compiling codes of law, casting cannon, working on articles of luxury, or by playing the violin or the piano. Love cannot be so mad!"

Out of harmony here, yet Bondareff and Tolstoi soon come together again, and proclaim in unison that physical toil is not only the duty of man, but is, besides, the supreme moral remedy, the most efficacious agent of our salvation. Bondareff has shown Tolstoi how field labor (which he calls so expressively "bread labor") is the primitive toil, to which all men ought to apply themselves and by which all men ought to live. Other secondary tasks should not be performed till one has stirred the earth for at least forty days. In short, as a general rule, man ought to feed himself, clothe, lodge and shelter himself, through his own efforts, without need of others.

Finally, it is clear to Bondareff as well as to Tolstoi that not only physical toil does not prevent mental activity, but that on the contrary it rather increases the dignity and the power of the mind. Accordingly *Toil* shows us that what Tolstoi teaches us, the peasant Bondareff put into practice before him. If a comparison were made again between "What to Do" and "Toil" it will be seen that Tolstoi sets forth almost the same theories as Bondareff. Undoubtedly the romancer-philosopher keeps all his originality, but it is still true that he found the first traces of his teachings in the peasant's book. And is it

not a grand sight, that of this gifted writer, the famous author of "War and Peace" seeking in the *izbs* (hut) of a peasant the word of life, the magic formula which will let that heavenly Jerusalem of which all men dream rise here below.

II

Toil not only shows us how Tolstoi's ideas upon social reform through physical toil were developed under the influence of Bondareff, but it enables us the better to understand how, till now, no one formed the theory of physical toil and its effects on the solution of the social problem.

What have people not said about Tolstoi, laborer and cobbler? A man of letters quite recently wrote: "Tolstoi's countrymen sometimes are lacking in respect toward that grand old man. From them has come the story of Tolstoi turned cobbler. We saw the nobleman established in a shop, and did not know whether we should admire or pity him. Neither pity nor admiration is needed. He does not make shoe-making his life work; he seeks only a distraction—rest to the brain in toil of the hands. Others use weapons, weights; he has a horror of useless efforts—he prefers to make shoes."

That is an utter misunderstanding of the spirit of Tolstoi's and Bondareff's teachings. Physical toil is, in their opinion, the first attribute, the essential character of man, the true, the only meaning of life, or rather the means to find life's meaning. Beyond doubt, one must work to preserve the equilibrium between mind and

body, but that is not the leading motive that leads Tolstoi to take the plow or the awl. He makes little account of the arguments that Jean Jacques Rousseau enumerates in favor of corporal labor. If it is necessary to work with the hands it is because life consists in the strife against nature to conquer the means of existence, and physical toil is the very law of life. Man finds in the accomplishment of this duty the complete satisfying of his needs, corporal as well as spiritual. To feed himself, to clothe himself, to care for himself and his own—these are the corporal needs he must satisfy. To feed, to clothe, to care for others—these are the sum of his spiritual needs. Every other form of activity is legitimate only if it conspires to satisfy these primordial needs of man, for in this lies all man's life.

Let us go further. Tolstoi is an idealist. Nature is not what we fancy it. The true nature is mind, and mind is superior to this or that individual. To recognize that individuality is only an illusion, and that we are the artisans of an infinite plan that infinitely surpasses us, this is life's meaning. To set ourselves free, to strip off personality, to follow the path of renunciation and of self-denial, ought to be our law. Now the act in which this ideal is incarnate, that in which it takes a body, is toil, the task of the centuries which binds the generations to one another and makes of the universe a harmonious whole, a single being accomplishing the same work.*

The results of this theory of toil are, in one direction, belief in the possibility of paradise on this earth, and in

* See Tolstoi's book "Life."

another direction, contempt for industrial toil, condemnation of commerce, hatred of cities, "veritable filthy Babels." "It is necessary," says Tolstoi, "to abandon the city, where there are only consumers and no producers, and renounce all the habits of city life, which far from constituting progress, are only the worst forms of corruption."†

Further, if this theory of manual labor is adopted, the problem of pauperism will be easily solved; it will be enough to divide the poor of the city among the peasant's houses. "How is it possible," Tolstoi asks, "to leave the village, the *mir* where are fields, forests, wheat, cattle, in a word, all the wealth of earth and go to seek one's living in places where are only stones and dust." *

Live by the toil of your hands, "work for bread," is what both Tolstoi and Bondareff recommend to all those who seek a cure for the social sores, to all those in whose hearts dwells the love of humanity and the sentiment of justice.

Tolstoi adds that if there are two, three, ten men who without entering into conflict with any one, without disturbing the government, without revolutionary violence, decide for themselves the terrible question that divides the world, the result will be that other men will see happiness near them, within their reach; that the hitherto irreconcilable contradictions between conscience and the organization of society will be settled of themselves by physical toil; that "cruel inequality"

† See "What is my Life?"

will disappear, and that finally heaven will descend upon earth.

So then, science, statesmanship, political economy, and, in a word, all external means are powerless to dissipate the evil. The only remedy is in a personal, moral reform, based on charity and manual toil. Humanity will transform itself only through the inner transformation of the individual. The whole social question comes to a question of morals. Social reform is for the honest man only a reform within. Let each one of us try to avoid sinning, to cultivate fraternity and Christian charity, and soon there will be no more need of policemen, of soldiers or of judges. Freedom from law, the city of God, the republic of the wise, will speedily be realized here below. Have we not here an original and powerful attempt to reform society and to save the human race? Is the reform that Tolstoi preaches possible? He only can doubt it who has not comprehended the true teachings of Christ which teach the renunciation of personal life and admit no other immortality than that of humanity.

III

We have tried to set forth briefly the teachings of Tolstoi and of Bondareff; comparing them, we have shown their scope and the consequences to society; it remains only to say a few words about Bondareff's book in particular.

The reading of Bondareff's work is interesting and suggestive. In this peasant is found profundity, close

joined to simplicity. To be sure, the thought is not always displayed with satisfactory clearness, a fault due in part to the vocabulary and *Biblical* style of the author. But this difficulty is easily overcome if one reads with a little attention. We have done our best to translate the text in a manner as exact and as precise as possible, preserving in it generally the mode of speaking common to the peasants of Russia, unless readers of the Holy Scriptures.

We have tried to explain in notes all that can offer any serious difficulty, and to illuminate, as it were, the texts of Tolstoi and of Bondareff by comparisons and contrasts.

I ought finally to thank my brother, M. Emile Pagés who has already translated one work of Tolstoi, ("What is My Life?") It was he who having gone in 1888 to visit the great Russian author, at Moscow, received from his hands the manuscript of *Toil*. My brother, too busy to translate this work himself, entrusted it to us. I may add that he has taken the trouble to examine with us some passages whose sense did not appear quite clear. May Leo Tolstoi and the peasant Bondareff, recognize their work through the medium of our translations; that will be the best reward of our efforts.

AMEDEE PAGES.

TOIL

AND BONDAREFF'S THEORY



The work which I offer to the public to-day is by Timothy Bondareff. I have changed nothing from the shape in which the author gave it. The only difference between the book and the manuscript is the spelling; in the place of Bondareff's own spelling, I have adopted the one usually used in books.

Another difference consists in the division of the work into two parts: the *Theme* and the *Appendix*. Under the title of appendix I have put all that appeared to be a repetition or a digression from the main subject.

The work seems to me very remarkable through its strength, its clearness, the beauty of the style, the sincerity of the convictions which one feels in every line, and especially for the importance, the truth and deepness that lies in the fundamental idea.

The starting point of the work is this: In all of the circumstances of life the most important is not to know what is good and necessary, but to distinguish, amongst the good and necessary things, the first in importance, the second, the third, etc. That is of vital importance through life, it must therefore be so in religious matters in which humanity is bound down to precise duties.

Tatien * the master of the first epoch of the church, said that the unhappiness of mankind was due, not so much to their ignorance of the real God, as to their belief in false gods and to the fact that they look upon God as he is not. One can say the same of the duties of mankind. The unhappiness and the crimes of men are

* Tatien, one of the apologists of the second century, who, in our days, attracts the historian's attention more by the originality with which he assimilates the revealed truths, the rough eloquence with which he attacks the pagan corruption, his sudden and obscure passage from orthodox to gnostic heresy. He was born in Syria, as he says himself in his Discourse to the Grecians.

After having uselessly searched the popular beliefs, the oriental mysteries and the various philosophical schools for a doctrine that could quiet his intellectual doubt and satisfy the needs of his conscience, he found it in the lessons of the Gospel, and developed in his first and most celebrated work, the Discourse to the Grecians, the causes of his conversion. That apology, which he probably wrote in Rome, differs from all of the others that were written at the same epoch by the bitter antagonism between the pretended pagan wisdom and the Gospel, antagonism which is found on every page. On one side, light, nothing but light; on the other, darkness; here mythology with its ridiculous fables, the clumsiness of which is but very roughly covered by their subtle allegories, art entirely devoted to sensual pleasure, philosophy with its chaos of contradictions; there, Christianity with its simple universality, giving its adepts a pure life and the courage to face death.

After the death of Justin the martyr, Tatien returned to Syria and joined one of the numerous sects to which oriental imagination had given birth.

We have ascertained, as surely as one can in such a domain of contradictions, that Tatien belonged to the sect of the Encratites, although he was not its originator. (E. Stroehlin, *Encyclopedia of Religious Sciences*.)

The best known of his works of that time, "The Diatessarion," might have been a mixture of the four Gospels, and Eusebius speaks of it without having seen it himself. Tatien wrote "The Diatessarion" Gospel in order to erase from the canonical texts the genealogies and other parts that trace the Savior's descent from David by successive birth.

not due so much to the fact that they are not aware of their duties as to the fact that they admit false ones, considering their duty what is not so, and ignoring entirely as such what is their principle duty.

Bondareff says that the unhappiness and crimes of men are due to the fact that they have taken too many frivolous and injudicious precepts for sacred duties, and that they have hidden from themselves and from others that duty which is undoubtedly the first, the most important of all duties; that which is found in the first chapter of the Gospel: "With the sweat of your brow, you will knead your bread." *

For those who believe in the holiness and infallibility of the divine word expressed in the Bible, it is evident that that commandment proves clearly enough through itself its own truth, since it was given by God and has never been contradicted.

As to those who do not believe in the Gospel, if, laying aside every prejudice, they consider this precept as a simple and natural expression of human wisdom, they will see how true it is when they examine the conditions

* It is thus that Tolstoi and Bondareff interpret the verse of the Genesis, in order to present more clearly the idea of manual work. The usual translation is: "With the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread." The following is the same text translated by Reuss from the Hebraic: "And to man the eternal God said: Since you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the fruit which I had forbidden you to eat, let the soil be cursed on your account; IT WILL BE WITH TROUBLE THAT YOU WILL DRAW FORTH YOUR FOOD DURING YOUR LIFE. IT WILL OFFER YOU BRIARS AND THORNS, AND WHEN YOU EAT THE PLANTS OF THE FIELDS, YOU WILL FEED YOURSELF WITH THE SWEAT OF YOUR BROW, until you return to dust; for it is from that that you were taken, dust you are, dust you will become."

This shows that the interpretation of Tolstoi and Bondareff is not wrong. They are right in their belief that the Genesis teaches that the natural condition of man is to dig the earth.

of human life; and that is exactly what Bondareff has done in his book.

What prevents them from seeing this statement in its true light, is the fact that most of them are accustomed to the erroneous explanations which theologians have given of the Gospel. And that habit is so strong that, as soon as you remind them that a doctrine is connected with the Gospel, they look at it with disdain: "What do we care," they say, "for the Gospel! We know that one can find in it the justification of anything, and that it is all a lie."

Nothing could be more unjust; one should not disdain the Gospel because men have not explained it right; and the man who says the truth is not guilty because that truth has been said before and in the same terms by the Gospel.

If we admit that what is called the Gospel is not the work of God, but that of man, and if, besides, what is purely and simply the writing of man is looked upon as coming from God, we must not forget that there is some reason for that. And that reason is very easily found.

Superstitious men call it the work of God because it is more deep than any human science, and that, in spite of continual refutations, it has reached us without losing its reputation of divine descent. It is called divine and it has been transmitted to us because it gives the most perfect rules we know of for human wisdom. At least that is the case in the greater part of the work that is the Bible.

Such is, in truth, in its literal sense, the text which Bondareff has chosen and on which he comments; such is the commandment which mankind has forgotten, and the meaning of which is annihilated by the present interpretation.

People generally look upon that judgment of God and

Adam's life in the Paradise as historical and real events, whereas the story should be considered in an allegorical sense, because it shows the contending tendencies which God has placed in human nature.

Man fears death and is submitted to it. A man ignorant of both good and evil seems to be more happy than we are, and yet our tendency is to learn everything. Man is fond of pleasure and of satisfying his needs whenever he can do so without incurring pain, and still it is in pain and sorrow that he finds himself and all of his race.

The words: "Knead your bread with the sweat of your forehead," is important, not because, as it is said, God spoke the words himself to our father, Adam, but because it is true, because it asserts one of the unavoidable laws of human life.

The law of gravitation is not true only because it was given by Newton; on the contrary, I only know Newton because he discovered it, and I am grateful to him for having taught me the eternal law that explains such a countless number of phenomena.

It is the same with the law: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread." It is a law that explains also an entire class of phenomena. Having once known it I cannot forget it, and I am grateful to the one who unrolled it to me.

That law, it seems, is very simple and known long since. But that is only in appearance and, to be convinced of the contrary, one has only to cast a glance around him. Not only that law is not recognized, but the one that is practised is diametrically opposed to it.

All of those who believe in God, from the tzar down to the beggar, every one, I say, is anxious, not to obey that law, but to break it.

To show that that law is eternal and unchangeable, to

explain how, if it is broken, unhappiness is the immediate result: that is what Bondareff tried to do in the work I am presenting.

That law, Bondareff calls it the primitive law, the first commandment, he places before all others. He then proves that sin, we may say the faults and treacheries, are due solely to its neglect. According to his views the principle one of the positive duties of humanity, the first and most evident duty of each individual, is to knead the bread with his own hands; he means by that that every man must accomplish the long and irksome work necessary to keep him from starving or freezing to death, and consequently to earn by his own manual labor his food, his clothes, his lodging and his fire.

Bondareff's fundamental idea is that the law, man must work for a living, recognized up to this day as being necessary, must be considered invariable and better than all others. Even more, it must be observed as a religious law, just as much as the Sabbath and the circumcision with the Hebrews, the fasting and the sacraments with Christians, the prayer five times a day, and other Mahomedan customs.

Bondareff asserts also that if men recognize in that manual labor a religious duty, no other occupation could prevent them from obeying that law, as nothing can prevent the believers from observing the days of rest prescribed by religion.

We have over eighty holidays a year, while the work of the bread only requires, according to Bondareff, about forty days.

How extraordinary it seems at first that so simple a way, one that every individual can understand so readily, requiring neither skill nor science, could save humanity from all terrestrial woes, however numerous they may be. But how much more extraordinary it is that, hav-

ing within our reach a means so simple, so clear and known for so long, we should ignore it and seek to cure our pain by the means of subtle and false theories!

Think it over and you will see that it is just as if a man, instead of putting a new bottom on his broken barrel, would invent an infinity of other means of keeping the water in it. Those inventions are a picture of the efforts we make to cure our woes.

And where does all of the evil come from, all of the sorrows of men, all of those that are not caused by murders, the gibbet, the prisons, fights and all the other cruelties of which they are guilty, because it is impossible for them not to be violent?

All of the sorrows of mankind, except the direct acts of violence, are assignable to hunger and privations of all kinds, to discouragement in work; they are due to wealth, to laziness and all of the vices to which they give birth. If man wishes to improve, must he not try to destroy that inequality which causes some to suffer from misery and want, while others are suffering from wealth and its seductions? How can those sorrows be eliminated if not by sharing the work that satisfies our needs, and by shunning wealth and laziness, creators of vice and temptations; or, in other words, to obey the law that orders every man to work at his own bread, as says Bondareff, to earn his living with his own hands?

We are so perplexed by the multitude of our religious, social and domestic laws; we have invented so many commandments by giving out, as says Isaia, rule after rule—one rule for this, one rule for that, that we have entirely lost the feeling of what is good and what is bad. One says mass, another recruits the army or collects the military taxes, a third judges, a fourth studies, a fifth heals, a sixth teaches; all in a word, thanks to such pretexts as the preceding, avoid the work of the bread, cast

it off onto others and forget that there are people who are dying of fatigue and hunger. But before giving the people priests, soldiers, judges, doctors and teachers, it would be best to look whether they are not starving to death. Not only we are forgetting that we have a host of duties to fulfill, but also that there is a first duty and a last, and that we cannot fulfill the last without having fulfilled the first, just as one cannot harrow the ground before having plowed it.

It is the accomplishment of the duty which is undoubtedly the first of all which Bondareff's doctrine advises.

Bondareff shows that the accomplishment of that duty will not be injurious to any of our other occupations—that it offers no difficulty, and that it saves man from poverty, need and temptation.

The accomplishment of that duty destroys above all the odious division of mankind into two classes which hate each other, and hide their mutual hatred under false caresses.

* The work of the bread, says Bondareff, will make men equal and clip the wings of luxury and envy.

People cannot plow the earth and dig wells with rich clothes on their backs, with white hands and living on delicate food.

It is by giving themselves to an occupation saintly and good for every one that men will become united. The work of the bread, says Bondareff, gives intelligence to those who have lost it, to those who have not lived the life that man should live; it gives joy and happiness to those who accomplish it, for it is an interesting and joyful occupation which God or nature has reserved for men.

The work of the bread, as says again Bondareff, is a remedy that saves humanity. If men would recognize that primitive law as being divine and unchangeable,

if every one recognized the work of the bread as an unavoidable duty, every individual, living on the result of his own work, would have the same belief in God, the same affection for his brothers; the poverty from which suffer the great majority would disappear.

We are so accustomed to the *modus vivendi* that admits the contrary, that is, that wealth and the means of avoiding the work of the bread are a gift of God, and the highest social position we can long for; we are, I say, so accustomed to that state of affairs that we are not willing to examine it carefully and recognize that it is incomplete, unjust and inconceivable.

We must therefore analyze carefully that condition of society and ask ourselves whether or not it is just.

Relating to that subject there are religious theories and political theories enough to satisfy every taste. Let us see what would happen if, following Bondareff's wishes, the clergy tries in its sermons to explain the first commandment, and if all mankind recognized the holy and primitive law relating to work, what would happen?

Everybody would work out and eat the bread he had made, and the bread which, let us say it again, is absolutely necessary, will be neither sold nor bought. What will be the result? Simply this: no one will starve to death. If a man does not gain enough to feed himself and his family, his neighbor will help him. He will help him because he could make no other use of things that cannot be sold. The consequence will be that man will have no more temptations, he will not feel the need of winning through deceit or violence the bread which he cannot get otherwise.

And, having no temptations, he will have no more use for violence and deceit. Such means will no longer be necessary as they are to-day, and, if he does have

recourse to them, it will be because he loves violence and deceit, not because he needs them as he does now.

The weak, those who have not strength enough to earn their bread, or have lost it in one way or another, will no longer need to sell themselves, to sell their work and sometimes also their soul in order to get their daily bread.

People will no longer try, as they do now, to cast off the work of the bread, and load it onto some one else; people will no longer kill the weak with labor and take it all off the strong. One will no longer notice in mankind the tendency to use every atom of intellectual strength in order to help, not the workingman in his work, but the lazy man in his laziness.

In sharing the work of the bread and recognizing in it one of the principle occupations of mankind, one would do the same as a man who, in the presence of a carriage dragged by madmen with the wheels up, would upset it to its right position, he would not break it, and it would go better after that.

The life which we lead in hatred and disdain for the work of the bread, and all of our efforts to reform that life so contrary to nature, what is it if not the carriage which we are dragging with the wheels uppermost? And all of the efforts which we can make to improve our conduct will remain fruitless as long as we do not turn the carriage over and put it on its wheels.

Such is the doctrine of Bondareff, and I am a believer in it.

Here is another way by which I explain to myself Bondareff's conception:

The time has been when men were eating each other. But the idea of the equality of mankind has been gradually developed, so that such a social condition seemed doomed to disappear, and cannibalism disappeared.

Then there came a time when some seized upon the work of others, after having made them slaves. But, human conscience becoming more and more enlightened, that social state could not last.

But that tyranny, having done away with its rough shape, hid itself under the veil of hypocrisy, and is still subsisting to-day. Man does not openly take the work of another. Violence has now taken another shape: the rich, thanks to the needs of the poor, make slaves of them.

But, according to Bondareff, the time is coming when the equality of men will at last be recognized, individuals can no longer draw their profit from the need of others; they can no more take advantage of their hunger and cold to make slaves of them, for men, having admitted that the work of the bread is a law necessarily imposed on one and all, will consider it as their strict duty not to sell the bread (meaning the objects of first necessity) and to feed, to clothe and warm each other.

I look at Bondareff's work in another light still, which is the following :

We often happen to hear that we must not be satisfied with negative laws, with negative commandments, meaning by that, rules which tell us what we must not do; we need, it is said, positive laws, positive commandments, rules that tell us exactly what we must do.

It is said, for instance, that Jesus Christ gave five negative commandments : *

1. Do not look upon others as stupid and foolish, and do not be angry with any one ; †

* In these precepts of the Gospel we find all of Tolstoi's beliefs. See for the development of the doctrine and the explanation of the Sermon On The Mount, his fine work called "My Religion."

† And I tell you that whoever gets angry with his brother will be punished by the judgement; that he who says to his brother, Racca, will be punished by the council; and that he who says, Madman, will be punished by the gehenna of fire.

ii. Do not consider marriage as a source of pleasure; let the husband not leave his wife nor the wife her husband; †

iii. Do not take an oath; never bind yourself by promises towards whomsoever it may be; or for whatever it may be; §

iv. Bear all violence and insult and offer no resistance to the wicked; *

v. Do not look upon men as your enemies. Love your enemies like your brothers; †

It is said that those five commandments only teach us what we must not do, and that they contain no commandment prescribing what we must do.

† It has been said, "If a man repudiates his wife, let him give her the letter of divorce."

"But I say unto you that whoever repudiates his wife, unless it be for the cause of adultery, exposes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries the woman who has been repudiated commits adultery."

§ Again you have heard that it was said to the ancients, "You will not perjure yourself, but you will answer to the Savior for whatever you have promised with oath."

"But I say unto you, Do not swear at all; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; neither by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king"

"Do not swear either by your head, for you could not change a single hair to black or white."

* You have heard what has been said, "Eye for eye and tooth for tooth."

"But I tell you to offer no resistance to the man who injures you; but if you are stricken on the right cheek hold out also the other."

† You have heard that it has been said, "You will love your brother and hate your enemy."

"But I tell you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, return the good to those who hate you, and pray for those who outrage and persecute you, that you may be children of our Father who is in Heaven; for He makes His sun rise over the wicked and over the good, and He pours His rain down on the just and the unjust."

It may in truth seem strange to you that there should not be in the doctrine of the Christ any precise commandments as to what should be done. But he alone can be surprised by it who does not believe in the doctrine of the Christ in which can be found not only those five commandments, but the doctrine of truth (the real and only doctrine).

The doctrine of the truth, taught by the Christ, is found neither in laws nor in commandments, but only in the direction which one gives to life.

The doctrine of truth teaches that life and righteousness do not consist in personal happiness, as many people think, but in the way you obey God and help your neighbor. And that precept is not a prescription that one must fill in order to obtain a reward; nor is it the mystical expression of a hidden and incomprehensible mystery; it is the revelation of the law of life which was not known in ancient times, the demonstration that life cannot be good unless it is directed in its true channel.

That is why the entire positive doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of the truth, is expressed in these few words: "Love God and your brothers as you do yourself."

It is impossible to give any explanation of that thesis: it is self-sufficient, because it is all.

The laws and the commandments of Christ, like the Judaic and the Buddhistic laws and precepts, only show the cases where the temptations of the world turn man away from the real channel of life.

Thus, there may be many laws and commandments, whereas there can be but one single positive doctrine of life which teaches us what we must do.

The life of any man must consist in the pursuit of some end. Whether he wishes it or not, he must walk towards it, since he lives. Christ shows man the road he should follow, and, at the same time, he shows them

how they can leave the right road to take the wrong; and these last indications may be very numerous. They are called the commandments. Jesus Christ has given five of those commandments, and they are such that, up to the present day, no one has been able to add to them or take anything from them. But a single precept shows us the right road, as if there could not be more than one commandment to teach us how to guide ourselves.

Thus the reasons for which the doctrine of Christ contains negative precepts and no positive precepts, only seems illegitimate to those who know neither the doctrine of the truth, nor even the real channel of life given us by Christ, and also to those who do not believe in His teaching. As to those who believe that the road given us by Jesus Christ is the only true one, they can not look for positive commandments in His doctrine.

The various positive doctrines that result from that doctrine of the real channel of life are always clear and precise for those who believe in the lessons of Christ. The people who know the real channel of life resemble, to use the expression that Christ gave us, a spring of fresh water, a spring that flows out of the soil.

All of their actions result naturally one from the other as the stream spreads in spite of the obstacles it meets with.

The man who believes in the doctrine of Jesus Christ can not ask what are his positive duties any more than the spring that flows out of the soil can ask what it must do. . It gives water to the fields, the earth, the grass, the trees, the birds, the animals and men.

That is also the conduct of the man who believes in the definition of life given by Jesus Christ; he goes straight to his end,

The man who believes in the doctrine of Christ will not ask what he must do. Love, which will be the element of his life, will show him plainly and clearly what road he must follow, and what are his duties for the present and the future.

The first and most pressing of the works which love must accomplish consists in feeding him who is hungry, in giving water to him who is thirsty, in clothing him who is naked, in helping the sick and the prisoners. Such is the advice which we find continually in the doctrine of Christ, and which is given us by our own heart. Even more—the entire doctrine of Christ, the wisdom, the conscience, the feeling, everything tells us to give no other proof of love to the living men before having assured the life of our brothers, and sparing them the pain and death which overtake them in their unequal contest with nature;* everything, in a word, tells us to accomplish what is the first condition of human life, which is the work of the bread, the most important, the most irksome of all works, and the one which all should be submitted to.

Just as the spring cannot ask where it will send its water, if it should water the grass and the leaves of the

* That idea of the eternal struggle with nature, appearing to him as the principle duty of mankind, is constantly to be found in the works of Tolstoi and especially in "What Should Be Done." "The first" says he, "the most unquestionable duty of man, is to share in the struggle against nature for one's own life and that of others." And again: "That God or that law of nature that created the world and mankind acted either right or wrong. But the situation of men in the world since we know them is such that, naked, without hair on their bodies, without a hole in which to seek refuge, unable to find food in the fields, like Robinson on his island, they are all obliged to struggle constantly, to struggle unremittingly with nature in order to cover their bodies, to make clothes, to surround themselves with a barrier, to build a roof over their heads, to prepare their food in order to appease, two or three times a day, their hunger, that of their children, too weak to work, and that of the old and feeble."

trees, or flow lower down and moisten the roots of the plants and of the trees, likewise also a man who knows the doctrine of the truth cannot ask what he must do first of all, whether he must teach men or protect them against the enemy, amuse them or give them the comforts of life, or else help those who are dying of starvation. A spring does not spread over the soil, does not fill the ponds and quench the thirst of animals and men before quenching that of the earth: likewise the man who knows the doctrine of the truth cannot think of satisfying the less imperious needs of mankind before having satisfied their first one, before having helped to feed them, and having shared their struggle against poverty. The man who practices the doctrine of the truth and of love can never be mistaken as to the use he should make of his activity. The man who sees that his duty in life is to help others will never be mistaken to the point of thinking that he helps those who are dying of hunger and of cold by making laws, by casting cannons, by making objects of luxury or playing on the violin or the piano.

Love can not be stupid.

Just as love for a person does not consist in reading to her novels if she is hungry, or in giving her costly earrings if she is cold; likewise it is not admissible that love for one's fellow beings can consist in amusing those who have eaten, and abandon to neglect and poverty those who are hungry and cold. The true love, that which acts, far from being unintelligent, gives alone, on the contrary, the real sagacity and the real wisdom. That is why the man who really does love will not make a mistake; he will accomplish immediately the first action demanded by love for mankind; he will help those who are hungry and cold, those who are in pain. But to help the hungry and all of those who are unhappy, it means to undertake a personal contest with nature. He who wishes

to deceive himself and deceive the others can, at the time of danger, in the struggle of humanity against poverty, refuse to help them, increase their unhappiness, and assert to himself as well as to those who are dying before him, that he has other occupations or that he is seeking for some way of saving them.

A true man, a man for whom life consists in doing good, could not say such heartless words; and, should he make an answer like that, his conscience would never approve of the lie; his only refuge would be in the wily and diabolical theory of the "Division of Labor."*

Amongst all of the doctrines on human wisdom, from that of Confucius up to the Koran of Mahomet, the Gospel is the only one in which he will find that idea strongly expressed. It is the Gospel that will convince him of the necessity of helping mankind, not with the theory of the division of labor, but in the most simple way, the most natural, the most necessary. It is the Gospel that will show him the necessity of helping the sick, the prisoners and those who are dying of cold and hunger.

But one can not help the sick and the prisoners without contributing personal and immediate work, for sickness, hunger and cold do not wait in their mortal work.

* Tolstoi has discussed the theory of the division of labor and shown its disastrous results in "What Must Be Done."

Of course, according to Tolstoi, the division of labor would still exist in the human society, but the question is to discover how it can be rendered just. It has engendered admirable progress, but, I know not by what unlucky chance, that progress has not improved, it has even been injurious to the majority, to the workingmen.

How then can we make the distribution of work more equal?

To reserve one's life for a manual work, identical for all, that is the first duty; when that one is fulfilled each individual can choose a speciality, but still in such a way as to be useful to others.

The man who practices the doctrine of the truth will show in his life, entirely devoted to helping others, the truth of the primitive law, formulated in the first book of the Genesis: "By the sweat of your brow, knead your bread." It is the primitive law, or the first commandment, as Bondareff calls it; and he shows us that it is a positive law.

The law is such, in fact, for those who do not understand the real channel of life as shown by Jesus Christ; it was such for those who lived before Him, and it will remain such for those who do not believe in Him. That law seems positive to them: it asks that each one of us, according to the will of God, manifested in the Bible and in our intelligence, should feed himself with the result of his own work. It will keep that character as long as the channel of the human life, expounded by the doctrine of the truth, will not be known to man.

But when the men will be familiar with the road they are to follow, the one discovered by Jesus Christ, the law which consists in kneading the bread, while still remaining as true as ever, will become a part of the only positive doctrine of Christ, (love each other), and, from then on, it will be positive no longer, but negative.

When men will understand the real Christian doctrine, that law will simply show them what temptations man has been exposed to, it will tell them what man must avoid in order to remain in the channel of true life.

For a man of the old testament who will not recognize the doctrine of the truth, the law reads as follows: "Work the bread with your own hands."

But for the Christian its meaning is negative. It says to him: "Do not think that one helps humanity by taking advantage of the work of others, and not earning your bread with your own hands."

It draws the attention of the Christian to one of the most ancient, one of the most criminal temptations that man was ever submitted to. Against that old temptation, so fatal in its consequences, and which it is so hard to look upon as deceitful and contrary to human nature, against that temptation, I say, Bondareff's book is entirely written. His advice is equally telling for him who believes in the Old Testament, and for him who believes in the Gospel; as well as for him who does not believe in the writings of a man and obeys his own reason, and, lastly, for him who knows the doctrine of the truth

Reader, my dear brother, whoever you may be, I love you. Far from wishing to sadden you, to offend you or introduce evil into your life, I want but one thing: to help you!

I could and I wished to prove by a long development, the truth of this thesis, answer all of the objections which I hear made against it; but what good would length or talent do me, what good would it do me to be right, I cannot convince you if you only allow your mind to struggle with me and let your heart remain cold.

That is what I fear. I fear that if I discuss with you, I will offend you by the pride and coldness of my mind, and consequently be injurious to you. Let us not reason then. I have but one request to make: do not discuss, do not demonstrate, but question your heart.

Whoever you are, whatever your qualities, however good you may be, whatever situation you may occupy, can you quietly drink your tea, eat your dinner, talk of politics, of art, of medicine, of science, of teaching, when you see or hear at your door a man who is hungry and cold, who is exhausted and ill? No, but you will say, they are not always there at my door. That may be,

but they are fifteen miles or ten rods away from your house; they are there and you know it. Consequently you cannot live peacefully however great may be your joy, it is poisoned by that recollection. To keep from seeing those unhappy people you must bolt your door, keep them away by your coldness or else seek refuge in some retreat where you will not find them. But they are everywhere! And if there was a single spot from where you could not see them, could you escape from your conscience? What can you do then?

You know, and Bondareff's book tells you, you must go down to the bottom, to the place which seems to you to be the bottom, but which is the top. Unite yourself with the men who feed those who are hungry and clothe those who are cold. Fear nothing. Far from being worse, your new condition will be better than the previous one. Put yourself on a level with the others; undertake with your weak and unskilled hands, the work necessary to feed those who are hungry, dress those who are cold, work the bread, struggle with nature, and, for the first time, you will feel solid ground beneath your feet; you will grow familiar with independence, liberty and strength; you will no longer need to hide, and you will enjoy a pure delight and pleasures which the world had never given you any idea of. You will have delights unknown until then. For the first time you will meet simple and strong men, your brothers, who, in spite of the distance that separated you from them, have fed you until to-day.

To your great satisfaction you will find in them virtues of which you had been unaware; you will find such modesty and such kindness with you that you will feel unworthy of it. Instead of the hatred and the disdain which you expected, you will meet caresses, grateful-

ness and respect, because having lived all of your life through them, you have suddenly remembered their poverty, and wish, with your weak hands, to help them. You will see that the island on which you had sought refuge in order to be spared by the sea, was nothing but a heap of mud in which you were being drowned, while the sea, that you dreaded, was dry land. It is there that in the future you will walk bravely, quietly, happily.

It was bound to be thus because, turning aside from the road of deceit onto which you had been drawn in spite of yourself, you will find the highway of truth. After having disobeyed God's will, you will accomplish it faithfully.

LEO TOLSTOI.

Moscow, March, 1888.

PART II:

TOIL ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

BY THE

PEASANT BONDAREFF

TOIL

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead thy bread; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return—GENESIS III: 19.

Before speaking, according to my strength, of the question of toil and of idleness, I must tell who I am. Am I not like those who, showing people the road they must follow, the road of righteousness, follow themselves the road of evil, the most contrary to justice and common right?

Up to the age of thirty-seven I worked as a farmer for a pomestchik* of the Don, called Tchernozouboff. Everyone knows how the men of my class are laden down with work. Later on the pomestchik enlisted me as a soldier, and my five young children remained under the same heavy, intolerable yoke,

When I arrived in Siberia, in 1857, with my wife and two children, the clothes we wore were the only ones we had, and they had been given us by the state.

* Lord, owner of an estate.

But in the last fourteen years I have earned a little house, so that I am now the equal of the comfortable peasant who has always lived here.

And how did I acquire all that? Simply by cultivating the earth. Here is the amount of work I can accomplish. When they are mowing the wheat, where two good workmen can hardly succeed in tying the sheaves behind a mower, I can succeed alone in spite of my sixty-five years, and the work is as well done, and the sheaves are as strongly bound. God is witness, reader, that I am telling the truth.

One can see that, just as it is with you in the high world, the superior rank is given to the general, in our world it is given to the skilful workmen.

I have then in all justice the right to sit, like the general, on the same chair. What am I saying? The general should remain standing before me.

Why? the reader will ask anxiously. Because the general eats the bread produced by my work, while the contrary is not true, and that is what will be fully explained and justified further along.

You know now, reader, who I am.

Have I not the right to speak and write about toil and idleness? I have that right, and I make use of it.

If, among the developments and explanations that follow, you should find some that are useless, or perhaps even injurious, please consider them void. They are not dictated by any bad intention; but, on account of the weakness of my mind, they seemed to me, erroneously it is true, to be interesting.

You, the high classes, you write thousands of books. Are they less untimely and injurious? And still those books are adopted, approved of and published.

But we, in the lower class, write on our side, the present short story for all time and for our defence, and

you will probably cast it aside, as I have been told by more than one, on account of my lack of talent and eloquence. That would be a great insult to us and also a great insult to God; I know with perfect certitude, that heaven will soon come to our defence if you refuse the bread, I mean the truth.

" Can you deny the truth, can you live without eating? No! Inside of an hour you will hold out your hand toward that tree of life, forbidden to you, toward the bread produced by the work of others, and you will carry it away. There is something there that makes one think. °

That is why I request you, reader, to have pity on yourself; give the question all of the care that it demands, and then you will be right; and if some one else refuses to consider it, you will not be responsible.

Do I expect any reward for the trouble I am taking?

That may be why I work, why I write? No; the only return I expect from it is punishment; the rich people have warned me.

If, they said, you addressed the blame to the lower classes, then you might be rewarded; but you are wounding well known people, and will be punished as surely as you will die.

But what may save you, perhaps, is that this work will be destroyed.

One must have an aim, I answered. For the truth which is proclaimed, one must be ready not only to suffer, but even to die. But it may be with them that lies the greatest fault, they might be punished severely; that is what we will show further on.

That is then the answer I made to the idlers who were predicting such terrible suffering for me. Certainly it would be in my interest to speak allegorically, but I do

not do it. You may be angry if you wish; I will follow the straight path.

Several rich people, having read my writings, were deeply offended. "You are writing that," they said to me, "not against everybody, but against me alone."

That is why, in the name of the God of truth, I beg you, reader, not to have that same idea. I am writing in the name of every farmer and against all of those, whoever and however many they may be, who do not, by the work of their hands, produce the bread which they eat.

My whole work can be resumed in two words:

1. Why, according to the first commandment, do you not reap the bread which you eat, and do you eat the bread produced by the work of others?

2. Why, in theological and other books, are the farmer and the work of raising wheat not approved of, and even held in the greatest contempt?

It should be enough to ask those questions. But as you persist in denying manual labor in every way, I am obliged to write to greater length on the subject.

And now, reader, I request that you do not eat for two days before judging my book.

Humanity is divided into two groups: one is noble and honored, the other is humble and deprived. The first is richly clad, owns a table covered with delicious food, and sits pompously at the seat of honor: they are the rich; but the second group, clothed in rags, exhausted by the use of dry food and by the irksome work, bearing a humble and humiliated look, remains standing on the threshold: they are the poor laborers.

The truth of my words is confirmed by the parable:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day;

"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." (Luke xv: 19, 20.)

Well! I will ask my companions, the laborers who always remain on the threshold: Why do we always remain silent before them like the quadrupeds? Certainly one should be silent before a more deserving man, on the condition that one should know why, where and to what extent to be silent, but one should not be vilely humble, and adore him as an idol.

It is therefore in the name of all of the latter that I speak to all of the former and say: Answer the questions which I will ask.

1. Adam, for having disobeyed God's order, "Do not taste of the fruit of the forbidden tree," not only lost his own happiness, but brought the same punishment down onto all of his descendants until the end of centuries. That shows that he committed the greatest act of impiety, but we must not think that his crime consisted in eating, so to say, the forbidden fruit, that is the apple.

2. Then he tried to hide himself amidst the bushes of that garden. According to the words of Scripture, "Adam and his wife hid amongst the laurel bushes."

But who was he hiding from? Men did not exist yet. From God, most certainly.

See into what madness evil draws man! Can one hide from God? That shows that, understanding his fault, he expected to receive the punishment, and here is the un hoped for sentence which God passed on him: "For having disobeyed the order I gave you, this will be your punishment: You will knead your bread

in the sweat of your brow, and you will return to the earth whence you came."

3. Should not Adam have wept tears of gratefulness towards God for the unspeakable mercy He showed for him? What was that punishment compared to what he expected?

4. Can we now believe that Adam worked for nine hundred and thirty years, that he ate his bread in the sweat of his brow and that he lived from the work of his hands although he was noble, according to the ideas of his time, for it is through him that humanity increased and he is the father of mankind?

5. Did he wish for authority then or any power? No. For although he listened in the paradise to the advice of the snake that said to him and to his wife: "You will be like Gods if you know the good and the evil," which means that you will live like pomestchiks and will be the most intelligent and wise in the world, and, in spite of that, they were trying to hide from God.

6. Following the serpent's advice, Adam hoped to live in this world without working, but he was condemned, on the contrary, to seek for his food with the sweat of his brow, and, instead of attaining a supreme rank, he lost the dwelling where he had been born, and, exiled from it, he appeared poor and naked with his body for sole possession. As soon as the serpent became for him a horrible animal, the desire for evil contributed to his fall and that of all his race.

6. You see, reader, what resulted from this desire for possession.

And what must we think of the man who desires wealth, of the man who can live under parasols, with white hands, and, during his whole life eat the bread that others have worked for? The solution of this enigma is beyond the reach of our mind.

I know that you have already a multitude of objections to make, but do not criticise my ideas, I beg of you, before reading to the end.

7. Did Adam expect for a single minute, thanks to money which did not exist, or by any other unlawful means, to give that work into other hands, and to remain himself under the parasol waiting for a share of the work of others, like a beggar or a hornet? That is what is done to-day by many who think it would be a great crime to take a whisp of straw or a grain of wheat from others, and who see nothing wrong in taking and eating the bread made by other people which is served on their table.

8. But if our father Adam received for his crime a punishment to which he submitted willingly, or otherwise if he lived from the work of his hands until the end of his days; as it is said: "you will return to the earth whence you came,"^a we see that he is now innocent and that he has paid the price of the crime which he committed.

9. Scripture says again: "And then Adam will hold out his hand and eat the fruits of the tree of life, and he will live forever." Some suppose that it means literally of the tree on which the Christ was crucified. But such a supposition is not justified. Is it possible to admit that it is, thanks to the worthiness of others, from Christ, that man, who is not deserving, obtained the forgiveness of his sin? That is evidently invented to strengthen people in the hope that, without work, lying continually on their side, they can receive the inheritance of eternal wealth.

But if that tree has any connection with Adam's expiation, that is with the work of the bread, then it is a very irksome duty that is imposed on us.

Was I not giving a more just interpretation in saying that when Adam would eat the bread produced by the

work of his hands, then only he would live for centuries of centuries?

Let us suppose, for instance, that no one should hold out the hand towards that tree of life, meaning the work of the bread, as is the case with most of us; in such conditions would it be possible for the world to live?

It is therefore plainly and legitimately evident that we, the laborers, we are near the tree of life, but that all of you who avoid work, you are near the tree of death. Have I spoken right? You will be obliged to admit, I believe, that my conclusion is true.

10. Thus it is evident that if Adam by that expiation had purified himself of his crime in the eyes of God, that expiation has, during his whole life the power to atone for his sins.

As man is doomed to sin against God until the end of his life, this punishment is given to him: "You will return to dust."

Is it right?

11. And you of the higher class, only a limb of the same tree, why is it that during your whole life you will not consent to accomplish that expiation, and why do you eat several times a day? Are you not just as great a sinner as the laborers, my brothers?

But no, you are above us, you are more intelligent and more learned, and you are committing the greatest crime of all towards God and towards the world.

You will say: "I work more than the laborer; and it is with the money I have earned that I buy my bread." We will speak of that later.

12. It is seen by all that has been said, how useless it is to endeavor to transfer the expiation of our sins on to anyone else, for God knew himself what treatment should be prescribed for our illness, for our sin, and he prescribed.

Is it true?

13. But if we, the descendants of Adam, have inherited his sin, and at the same time, the atonement that was attached to it, and if we are really guilty of it, more so perhaps than Adam, for Adam did not know all that we have learned since then, in that case we must neither endeavor to avoid the punishment which God himself inflicted on Adam as well as on us, his posterity, and each one must work and earn his bread with his own hands, whoever he may be, whether rich or poor, whatever his worth and rank, except the excusable cases of illness or impotent old age.

14. Of course if one does not examine attentively manual labor, the anxiousness of earning one's life and one's worthiness, it may seem too little to atone for the multitude of our sins and make us innocent in the sight of God. For, since you are working for yourself, what reward can you expect?

I have explained in the preceding paragraphs and will say in the following ones what that reward is.

The worthiness of that work does not seem sufficient to you; but you would still remain unwilling to accomplish it if an angel came down from the sky to tell you how worthy it is.

15. You see then how Adam atoned for the first sin. But others assert that he was exiled into hell for five thousand five hundred years, and that he suffered there until Christ delivered him.

But that is certainly an interpretation contrary to the law. And why do people assert what does not agree with the law? It is simply to rid themselves "of those abominable occupations" and live like pomestchiks. But if it is right to think that Adam owed his deliverance to manual work, then we also must work diligently. Is it right?

16. I ask why God did not prescribe for Adam's atonement those virtues which we consider the most highly: fasting, prayer, sacraments, etc., but He prescribed to him that work in which the learned will not see or recognize any virtue, which they even look upon as a capital sin.* Why is it thus?

17. From all of the developments which precede it results that Adam belonged to our class, to the lower and ignorant class; he knew not how to write, read or talk well. God prescribed to him the occupation which was suitable to his mind. And he, being weak of mind, consented. But now God is giving the same orders to the learned through the Scripture and through the voice of conscience; and they retort with thousands of objections to which God himself knows no longer what to answer.

18. Until now we have only considered Adam's atonement; we must now speak of Eve's expiation. Was God not able to create in the beginning several thousand people? Why did he only create two; the husband and wife, Adam and Eve? Evidently it was because, in human life, there are two principal duties, two duties of the same importance: the first is to give birth to men; the second, to work with the sweat of your brow. God said to Eve: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; (what a terrible sentence); you will give birth to children in sorrow."

And he said to Adam: "You will knead your bread with the sweat of your brow and you will return to the earth whence you came."

19. Now I ask why, in woman's atonement, there is no hidden meaning, no allegory, and everything is accomplished literally as God said it. The woman who lives in a poor hut and the czarina who sits on a throne and wears a crown on her head, have the same destiny: "Their children come to them with pain." No difference

between them. No; and it is so true that they both remain half dead and sometimes die entirely.

Is it true?

20. But the women of the higher class might say: "I have no time to be delivered of a child, I have pressing state business to attend to; whereas by childbirth I would cause the state more loss than profit. And then is it right for me to be the equal of the lowest peasant, of the moujitchka? It is better for me to hire some other woman who will give birth to a child in my place, or to buy a child that is already born and which I will have for my own as if I had carried it in my bosom." Could she speak thus and accomplish what she says?

21. No, that cannot be done, the order established by God cannot be changed.

"Scrape together all of the wealth of the world and give it for a child. It will not be your's. It did not belong to you an hour before; it will not belong to you any more afterwards. To whom does it belong then? To the mother who bore it.

"With bread it is just as with the child. Man can avoid the work of the bread, buy with money a pound of bread; but that bread belongs to another and always will. It belongs to him who made it by his work."

For, just as God decided that woman cannot avoid childbirth with money or any other means, likewise also must man, by the work of his hands, procure the bread necessary for his food, for that of his wife and of his children. He cannot avoid that obligation, neither with money or any other means, whatever may be his rank or his worth.

22. No animals, neither the birds nor the reptiles, nothing that lives in the air or on the earth, can avoid the destiny which God set before it; but you, man, the most intelligent and the most learned of beings, why do

you alone cast it off? What will you answer to that? Will you again seek refuge in your lie: "I work more than the laborer, and I buy bread with the money which I have earned by my work?" Leave that answer aside for nothing is more false. For everything that exists in the world you can buy it with money, everything except bread.

23. I ask it once more, why is there no hidden meaning in the atonement inflicted upon woman; why, when it is a question of woman, is everything accomplished literally as God said it, while man's expiation is entirely allegorical? What excuses, what lies, what pretexts can you give that will not be as many defeats? "That commandment," will say the intelligent and learned man, "does not necessarily mean that one must work in the fields with a scythe, a rake or a flail. I eat my bread with the sweat of my brow, it is enough." And the simple, the ignorant man like myself will think that the intelligent man is right and perfect. But, for the third time, I ask for an answer to this question: why is everything literal in the atonement of the woman, while there is nothing but a symbol and an allegory in that of man?

24. God said again to woman, according to Scripture: "I increase, I will increase your pain and your wailings." It is plain, there is no hidden meaning. The suffering of a mother is so great that it can not be described, and the heart alone can understand it. "Your desires will all be in regard to your husband and he will dominate over you." And everything happens as it is said in the Scripture. Why is it then that the duty of the laborer's wife being literal, your's, that of the learned class, is allegorical?

25. How I regret that I am not eloquent! I feel all the truth and strength of what I say, and not being eloquent, I can not express what I feel, and my thought

grows dim and weak. But one hope encourages me, it is this, that if gold can be seen in the midst of mud, so can bread also, for it is better known, more appropriate and more dear than gold.

26. God said to woman: "You will not work to earn your food, but your children will come to you with pain." Why do our women work? Reader, while waiting for you to find the answer, I will answer myself.

You who eat the bread of our work, you are in Russia about thirty millions; but if our women did not work, according to the commandment, what would happen? One thing only: everybody would die of hunger.

That shows plainly and evidently that our women work for you and fulfill your duties: you eat the result of their work. I can not be sufficiently surprised that you do not fear the justice of God. But I was forgetting that you buy your bread with money.

Do you think that that excuses you?

27. I have heard that certain women took a poison that they might not have children, or that they killed them after having given birth to them. I ask what punishment those women deserve for having broken and disdained the commandment of God.

Is it not the very same punishment that should be inflicted on the men who have broken and disdained the commandment of God? What does it mean, except that they should not eat, since they have not worked? But no, they eat several times a day, otherwise they could not live.

28. "But the woman who has killed the fruit of her womb, spends her whole life in atonement; from the bottom of her soul she sighs and prays to God for forgiveness; until her last day she fasts and prays. Thus, it seems, she will win from God the forgiveness of the

sin she committed, of the violation of the commandment that concerned her.}}

But you, reader, do you repent, you who have, all your life, eaten the bread made by others? Are you asking God and man to forgive you? No; but on the contrary, you are not even thinking of it, you rely solely on your money, you live a merry life and think yourself equal with God.

*29. Woman being weaker than man, God gave her an unavoidable duty; thus we, the lower classes, being weaker in mind than you, we have also an unavoidable duty.

But you, being more intelligent and learned than we, it is willfully that you act as you do: if you wish it, you can accomplish this work; if you wish it, you do not do it, because you can make others do it for you.

Since you know how to avoid the work of the bread, and who to oblige to do it, then you can be judged unmercifully, for you do not sin unwittingly. Whereas I, who, during my whole life, have eaten my own bread and fed others with my work, I may not have shown much intelligence, but I have deserved the smile of God.

30. Why is it that the real meaning of that commandment which is above all other commandments, is ignored by men?

I do not see any other cause than the following:

* If laborers were giving the explanation of the law, they would show it with its full meaning and power, then all of the czars and all of the kings and all of the princes of this world would recognize that the first and most holy duty is to work with one's hands. Then the lower class could breathe, it can not now, and each one would carry on his heart the key of the entire law: "Never desire anything that belongs to your brother."

31. Because it is those people who hardly know where and how the wheat grows, because they have explained and explain the law; how is it that they have entirely misunderstood and forgotten it. 7

Because before that commandment all of the religious customs easily executed and requiring no work, would lose their strength and be cast aside;

Lastly, because the most important is that he who teaches and explains the law, should show everywhere the example and put his own hand to the work, while generally his hands are very white and unable to do any work of that kind;

For all of those reasons the commandment has been abandoned, half extinct, I should say that it has been buried alive and will never resurrect for you or you for it until the end of the centuries.

32. If that commandment, the first one that God gave, from which comes every virtue and which gives birth to eternal happiness, both terrestrial and heavenly, if it was accepted and understood, the affection for wheat would be so great that fathers would be telling their sons: "When I am about to die, carry me to the wheat field that my soul may there part from my body, and bury my remains in that very field."

But what is happening now?

Those who work expect no reward from God; those who live from the work of others expect no punishment.

33. If that commandment, I repeat it, was accepted and understood, what help would not be given to the farmers for the work of the wheat; it would be so great that one acre would produce more than five do now.

But how can we make you accept that law? If we do not follow the commandment you have the right to oblige us to, but if you do not follow the commandment,

or rather, the one who gave it, like the prodigal son leaving his father, what can oblige you to return?

Before you we are but naughts without units, as we have been called.*

And why do you lower us to such a degree? Simply because we are feeding you.

34. God could certainly have found another way of rendering the earth fertile and making it produce wheat, but he has made of that work the atonement of our sins. In other words, man not being able to live without sinning and without working for his food, he allowed us to atone for our sins by that work.

But you, neglecting such a precious remedy, and, as we have said, burying it in a tomb that none of the inhabitants of the earth might find it, you have decided that man can be saved by the sole belief in God.

Satan also believes that there is but one God and obeys him, as we see in the book of Job, II, 1-3.

You class the work of the bread with the secondary virtues and even that you do not always dare to do; of the head you have made the tail, and even that has not satisfied you.

Therefore you will be severely punished by God, and He will be unmerciful to you, because for thousands of years you have hidden that commandment, and of a live being you have made a corpse.

Read all of the books of the world and you will find in none that the work of the bread and the farmer are respected: they are looked upon as less than nothing.

* It might be thought that we are inventing and that no one calls us thus. But it is an epithet we have heard several times and from different people. Here is how we can answer:

You all, you are I (the unit) and we are O, but as we are bound to you the two terms must be brought together, making ten: which show that we are nine to one.

People do not think that it is to the farmer that they go to buy their bread and that everything depends upon his willingness. Now think it over.

35. All of the crimes that are committed on this earth, such as robbery, murder, plundering, etc., all of that results from the fact that the commandment is hidden from men.

The rich use every way to avoid that odious occupation, and the poor to shake it off.

But explain to man the importance and the virtue of that commandment, all crime will stop immediately and forever, and mankind will be delivered from poverty and suffering because each man will do his best to fulfill the commandment of God.

Fifty years ago, I remember it well, the tax in money was of four roubles per person, the custom-house duties were small, and the treasury was satisfied.

To-day the tax in money is of thirty-five roubles per person, and, in general, they have increased ten times over on everything; the number of tax-payers is more than double; and still they are complaining that it is not enough, that the taxes are not high enough. That makes one suppose that in fifty years more you will increase the tax to one hundred roubles and ruin the people.

And why? because everybody wants to dress stylishly, but without working. Where must all that be taken? Evidently from those who can say and do nothing to protect themselves. In every way, from above and below, from outside and inside, you outrage us intolerably. That is why the people have become scheming and artful; they love to deceive: and thus, not having a kopek coming from the treasury they will prove that they have not five thousand, but ten thousand, and they will get them. Is it not so?

During the last days of March, 1883, I heard that physical punishment was re-established. I trembled on hearing the news. As the butcher cuts meat with a dull hatchet, thus strikes the executioner. It is a thousand times preferable to be killed than to endure such torture.

And then I resigned myself to it for a while, wondering by what deed the executioner had better begin his action. By none, I answered myself.

If there is no other way—if there is no other possibility of obliging men to do right, then must we submit, to seeing the blood flow.

But there is a way, a decisive remedy against crimes. It is the oldest law which God has given to us. It is not in vain that God gave us no duty to accomplish before our work, and that he orders us to avoid no other vice than idleness.

That shows that work includes every virtue, while laziness and idleness, on the contrary, have produced every sin. If, therefore, there is a criminal amongst the farmers, it is simply because he does not observe that law. We must not forget, however, that other work is meritorious, but only after the bread; that is, after we have eaten the bread earned by our own hands.

You have allowed the executioners to whip men, but what men? We are evidently the only ones. The executioner does not touch the rich who have to protect themselves: 1st, friends, 2nd, eloquence, 3rd, cunning, and 4th, money. We have nothing of all that.

Of course nothing will prevent the rich man from atoning for his crime if the superior authorities hear of it. But otherwise the matter is hushed up immediately. And it is said in the Deuteronomy that “presents dazzle the eyes of judges.”

Among all of the requests which I have to make, this is the one I care the most for: Do not fleece the poor

while sparing the rich. And if you do fleece, begin at least with the head and not with the tail. I could not express my request more plainly, but remember my argument against your habit of spilling human blood. It is not the law, but the lack of laws that defends him who protects you against crimes. The executioner should disappear, his name even should be forgotten in the universe.

36. But then what will say the lower classes? There is so and so who can live on the work of others, why should not I also live in the same way?

I also will kill, rob and be violent; I want to have my turn in living as a pomestchik, with my pockets full; I want to order and obey no longer. It is not through honest work that you will succeed in having stone houses. "Honest work will not make you rich, but round-shouldered; if you do not sell your soul to the devil you will not grow rich, etc.," (Russian proverbs).

And it is yourself who come to judge him and exile him to Siberia, when you are the only cause of all evil.

37. You see, reader, how much harm there is in that evil, the aversion to the work of the bread. You see what white hands do and what good dirty hands draw from the earth. And lastly you see the good that would result from the revelation of the commandment.

Have good writers given themselves a great deal of trouble to explain it and teach it? *Perhaps they have*, but it would have been far better to show how useful it would be to observe it, how wicked it is to cast it aside; they should have spread it in books, in their sermons and in religious ceremonies, exhorting every one to accomplish the work of the bread. It would have been a thousand times better than to establish a religion on the works and merits of Christ, and avoiding the work that was prescribed for them by God, all that was sim-

ple and easy, but it would have been necessary for the writer or the preacher to set to work himself and give the example; but how can you oblige people to work when it tires them already to carry their hand to their mouth?

38. If I were a man who had avoided work, who had never seen how it is done, and if, in spite of that, I had begun to teach such ideas as these, everybody would have had the right, for answer, to spit in my face and walk away in disgust. And if until then I had been looked upon as a reputable man, from that time on I would have been rightly despised.

That is why, up to the present day, the writers have said nothing; that is why they say and will say nothing of that commandment until the end of centuries.

Adam committed a crime; God punished him according to the extent of his crime, as we see in the Holy Scripture; he is then equal to God. Why then does tradition wish him to have been exiled into hell for five thousand five hundred years?

Does the New Testament allude to that exile? Whence comes that legend? If that was true, by imposing on him the atonement of work God would have deceived Adam by a promise that was never to be realized, God would have lied. For, if that work was useless to Adam, if, having endured fatigue during his whole life, his only reward after death is the torture of hell, all will exclaim: "Is that the way in which God will reward our work also?" If it is true, what must be done? How can we live? By robbing and killing?

That is why you are inventing laws, that you need an executioner, that you brand men with a red-hot iron, that you send them into exile, that women remain widows and that you turn the orphans you have made into victims of vice and crime.

But whose fault is it?

It evidently incumbs to him who hid and who is hiding the law of work.

39. If there were a man in the world capable of having over you the power you have over us, he might allow you, though it is doubtful, not to make your own bread. But you are envied by the laborers, and, spreading out the idleness of your life, you take the strength away from the hands that try to accomplish that work. Far from helping them, the sight of your idleness keeps them from progressing in their work and even induces them to commit crimes. You can not be thanked for such an influence as that, is it not so?

What a shame that there is not such a man! That is why you hear them cry: "God is in heaven and the czar is far away."

40. It can be seen from what precedes and from what will follow that the man who eats the bread of his work is happy in this life and will be blessed in the future.

But the contrary always happens to him who eats the bread of others. No other virtue can help him, because he has mutilated the law of God, or, in other words, because he disobeyed the principal commandment and the obedience to the others can bring no remedy.

41. Every object, every product which is on earth is bought and sold at it's price, neither higher nor lower than right, and to each merit is attributed its reward. All remain even and no one owes anything to any one else. But still our work, meaning our bread, is taken from us for nothing; we are neither paid nor rewarded. Why is our work not paid for? you will ask, reader. Must I repeat the same thing over ten times?

42. In the name of God, I beg of you, tell me truly if you would work for your bread during thirty days at

various times of the year. Why does it seem impossible to you? Is it because you can not, or because you will not? Answer me truly: can you not do it, or will you not?

43. The work of the bread is a sacred duty for each one of us, and we must give ourselves no excuse in order to avoid it. The more learned a man is, the more necessary that he should give the example of that work, never pretext any hindrance, and never avoid it.

44. Must I give theological proofs, because I wish to save you? No; but for the reason that theology alone gives me arguments in favor of that work.

And, in the second place, because the people of my class believe firmly in God, in the future life and in the Holy Scripture. Hearing these words they will repeat them, and like people dying of hunger or of thirst, they will rush towards this work and towards all other kinds of labor.

45. Then the dark night will become for them a dazzling bright day; the clouds will disappear, leaving a blue sky; the cold will change into warmth, and impotent old age into strong youth.

That is why I take from the Scripture the arguments I can find; but it is not to you that I am speaking.

But who will read them these articles? for you have no right to read them. Must the laborers be advised to read them themselves? It is impossible, it would be a great fault.

46. According to the proverb, every day is not a holiday; but it is every day lent. In other terms, we must always teach and advise others to be pleasing God and useful to society. But our turn has come to stop teaching and advising others, and to simply ask ourselves this question: Why are you teaching others when you can not teach yourselves? It is also said in

the same thought: "You bind up heavy bundles and load them onto the shoulders of men, but you yourself, you do not want to lift your finger." One must begin by setting the example of virtue, and then advise others to follow it, otherwise the scythe in cutting the grass is broken on a stone.

47. O you who belong to the high classes of society, think of this: If all of the farmers of the different parts of the world avoided, as you do, the work of the bread, then the whole universe would soon die of hunger. Would you admit that we should give for our conduct the same explanation that you do for yours?

We never go to bed, you will say, we are continually working. We do not eat free bread, but we buy it with the money earned by our work, and we pay the farmer the price he asks for it. We eat our own bread by the sweat of our brows.

But if we all work where will the poor get their money? We give them money and they give us bread. Therefore the hand washes the hand and both become white. We live through them and they live through us. We can not at the same time govern others and guide them and work with our hands.

The commandment given to Adam applies not only to the work of the bread, but also to every other occupation. One can not live without bread but one can not live either without the things with which we are busy. When God created the world He wanted some to work at one thing and others at another. Man only accumulates money in order to be rid of that ungrateful work. And then it is impossible for me to divide myself up and do several things at once.

I have no rest; night and day I am busy and I hardly have time to eat bread already prepared. If we all worked at the bread, the universe would suffer.

I have a great deal of money and I make a great deal without working, and you want me to go into the fields and torture myself for thirty kopeks a day! People would think I am a fool. I prefer to work with my money here at home.

But if everybody must work, let them begin who are a hundred times more rich than I! etc.

48. Such are the pretexts and objections which you oppose to the law, those are the reasons for which you, who belong to the upper classes, avoid the work of the bread. If all of the men of my class began to abandon the work for the same reasons that you give, would you admit them as a justification, coming from us?

No; but, thanks to the power you have, you would stifle us and all of our arguments.

But I ask why you recognize your excuses as legitimate?

Assemble a group of the men who think of nothing but the vanities of this world, and ask them what answer you should make to that question.

49. Bread can not be bought or sold. One can not, with the bread, accumulate wealth, for it's price is beyond the limits of the human mind. It is only in certain cases, and very legitimate ones then, that it must be given free: for instance to the hospitals, to the orphan asylums, to prisoners, to countries ruined by bad crops, to people left helpless after a fire, to widows, to orphans, to the deformed, to the aged and to those who have no home.

50. This commandment is not followed by the world, as we have seen and as we will see hereafter. It might have been placed amongst the virtues of slight importance, and brought thus at the tail end; but even that honor was not given to it.

Nature itself advises the farmer to cultivate the good of all goods, the bread.

But if not satisfied with seeing what is the greatest of all blessings, he could penetrate the deep mysteries of nature, then would be realized all that has been exposed in the preceding article. People would not ask of each other: "Give me some bread;" but they would say: "Take part of my bread;" and I do not believe that there would be a man in the world who would like to eat the bread reaped and prepared by others.

But what can be done now? You have hidden away that commandment as a stone is cast into the sea, so that its name even exists no longer and its recollection has vanished from the surface of the globe. But God judges between you and us.

51. Here are the objections made to us by a wealthy man: "How can you assert that it is forbidden to buy and sell bread, to traffic with it and make a fortune with it? Besides what the historians tell us, we see in the Scripture that in ancient times bread was bought and sold, and that it was not a sin against God. You say also that bread cannot be exchanged for money and that we must absolutely submit to manual labor; it is evidently absurd. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and other ancestors of mankind were rich and had both male and female slaves. We must conclude that they did not work themselves but that they ate the bread made by others; and still they are not guilty in the eyes of God.

52. And what proves still better how false your assertions are, is that the two great legislators, Moses and Jesus Christ, have not spoken of that commandment. When Moses wrote: 'Knead your bread with the sweat of your brow,' he meant by the words all kinds of occupations. Such must be the meaning of those words if one remembers that Moses himself lived for forty years at the court of Egypt, without working. During the forty years that followed he watched the sheep of Jethro,

his father-in-law, in the country of Midian; but he did not work the bread. During forty other years he led the Israelites in the desert; therefore he never worked. Still God received him, loved him and placed him above all of the other prophets; but, according to you, Moses was a parasite.

53. It is the same with Jesus Christ. He is the real God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and He alone judged Adam in the Paradise; but instead of saying: "Knead your bread with the sweat of your brow," He says in the Gospel: 'Look at the birds of the sky; they neither sow nor reap, they do not accumulate wheat in the lofts; but God feeds them.'

In truth, does it not seem from those words that the work of the bread gives no good result, and has no real usefulness in this life? In short, it is the most useless work, and God gave it to the idle.

54. Even more, name a single farmer whom God has admitted to heaven for this work. We do not know whether the prophets were rich, but, we are not sure either that they were poor. But, as their books have been approved of, we should conclude that they were rich, because the book of a poor man is never approved of, however good it may be.

That is what says Sirach, man inspired by God, when he remarks: 'The rich man has said an absurdity, and every one is silent, and his words are extolled to heaven. But the poor man has spoken reasonably, and, far from approving of it, they ask him who he is.' *

* If the rich man has been deceived, several assist him; if he speaks insolently (if he unveils what is sacred) he is justified.

But if the poor man has been deceived, he is even blamed; if he speaks wisely no one will listen.

When the rich man speaks, every one is silent and his words are extolled unto the skies.

When the poor man speaks they say: "Who is that one." (They

Yes, Jesus Christ called the poor 'his friends,' but he only wanted to encourage them, for fear that they would become desperate in their grief. What proves it is that he always went into the houses of the rich, and never into those of the poor."

55. My adversary continues and says: "When Noah came into the world, his father Lamack cried: 'This one will relieve us of our toil, and of the irksome labor of our hands on the earth cursed by the Eternal.'

* And that is how he delivered us from that cursed work; but he did not deliver you, the laborers, because you are cursed whereas we are not; and it is to be hoped that God will not be unmerciful to you because our class has trampled you under foot. Is that a sin in the eyes of God? No, for God admitted that it might be thus.

* 56. It is again said in the Scripture:

You will be cursed in the town and you will be cursed in the fields;

Your basket will be cursed and your kneading-trough;

The fruit of your body will be cursed, and the fruit of the earth, the calves and the sheep of your flock;

You will be cursed when you come and cursed when you go.

The Eternal will send down on you his curse, fright and ruin.

The adjective cursed means unhappy. I ask," exclaimed the rich man, "to whom those words were applied: To the rich man or to the poor? It is certainly to the poor laborer," said he. "Do you see now, Bondareff, how many anathemas God has cast upon the poor laborer, on his goods, on the fruit even of his body, and on all of his future generation?"

blame him for his poverty and oblige him to be silent) and if he slips they push him.—Ecclesiastics xiii: 26. Translated by Sacy.

Such are the laws on which is based the society of the wealthy.

57. "Am I saying the truth?" he asked. "Yes," I answered.

Should I have contradicted him? No, it would have been useless; could arguments shake his belief?

I simply thought to myself: you are lying, sir! You are not as intelligent as you think; and I am not as stupid as you think. In both cases you are greatly mistaken.

There are many well known people who will not despise my poverty; those will judge righteously between you and me.

58. "You see," said the rich man, "if a man of your inferior class should acquire a certain instruction, he would find how and by what occupation he could dispense with that work. So that if you had all studied, you would work no longer and you would imitate us."

"But what would we eat then?" I asked.

"We would all live as says the commandment of Christ: Look at the birds of the sky; they do not sow neither do they reap; they do not accumulate wheat in the lofts; but God feeds them." That is what he answered.

All of those arguments are entirely in opposition to the primitive commandment, as well as to the natural law.

I asked him: "Which is the most immovable law? Is it the theological law which has been written by man on paper, or is it the natural law which God wrote Himself in our soul?" Certainly neither one can be denied, but I prefer the second, the natural law, and I hope that you agree with me, reader.

59. "Very well, Bondareff, I warn you that if you present your ideas to the government, and if you place

mine by the side of them, my arguments are the ones that will be approved, they will be recognized as true and praised, while yours will be contradicted."

60. You see now, reader, how unreasonably loyal I have been.

I should have hidden the objections that contradict my arguments ; but I did not wish to alter the truth, first because I have told my age, and second because it is not admissible that one should speak of the sacred duty called the work of the bread, and mar it by hiding the truth and disguising it under ignoble flattery.

But, on the other hand, if you find in my answer any cutting remark which seems intolerable, clench your teeth and say nothing ; do not quarrel with me I beg of you.

You have been so accustomed in your life to listening to flatterers, that my out-spoken ways may seem intolerable !

61. Let us return now to our question. How many thousands of measures of wheat or of grain, how many roubles are taken from us each year in taxes and assessments !

Besides that income, the lords, the pomestchiks, the corporation of merchants and all of the wealthy own unspeakable millions. But money is not given free, and it must be earned with our arms of flesh and bone according to the commandment I have given, and not with the tongue or the pen.

62. Your ways of life are a cruel offense for us, and a shame for you. I know that you are a hundred times more intelligent and learned than I, and that is why you take my money and my bread. But, since you are intelligent, you must pity me, I am so weak. It is said: "Love your brothers like yourself," and I am your brother and you are mine.

Why are we poor and common? Because we eat the bread of our work and feed ourselves. Have we time to study and become learned? Bread, like intelligence, you have taken it all by skill or by violence: you have sinfully taken everything.

That is so, reader, whether you wish it or not. It is not my fault if the truth is so bitter.

63. The frenzy of need impels you to pray to God for the healthiness of the air and the abundance of terrestrial fruits: it is well. But to what hands do you owe that abundance? Who must plow the earth? Is it you or some one else?

“But it is impossible that it should be I, who have white hands, you will answer.” “It is to you, laborers, that the work belongs by right.” I would rather starve to death than to pick up a straw or a grain of wheat!”

64. You should, before your meal, ask for a benediction, not from God, but from us, the laborers, and, after the meal, thank, not God, but us.

If God sent you manna from heaven as he did to the Israelites in the desert, you should then thank him, but since it is from our hands that you receive the manna, you should thank us, because we feed you as we would feed little children or invalids.

65. When I had written all of the preceding articles, several laborers said to me: “What you are doing is useless. Do you think that you can make the wealthy come and work the bread? If the prophets and the masters of wisdom were all behind you, they would not listen. Let God himself cry in their ears with the judgment trumpet: ‘You are going to die and you will appear before Me to be judged, and your disobedience to My commandment will draw upon you a relentless sentence;’ even then the wealthy man will remain immovable be-

cause he will prefer wealth to all things divine. And the work of the bread is in his eyes more horrible than torture. But you, who are you? You are only the dust under the rich man's feet and you wish, by expressing your convictions, to oblige them to work?"

66. "I know," I answered, "that it is impossible."

But they may possibly approve of our arguments, since they are taken from the principal divine laws; and they may spread them amongst all of the laborers. For that single action God will grant them a great reward. Soon we would see men, like people exhausted with hunger and thirst, hasten to execute this work. It will only be later that they will take up other occupations, because they all result from the work of the bread. Then the darkest night will become for them a dazzling day, and everything will seem easy to them. That is why, in the midst of the cares and troubles of life, I undertook this work.

67. And besides that, the upper classes will see that we are deserving (they never noticed it or heard of it). They will feel guilty both before God and before man; they will no longer count as much on us; they will not crush us as they are doing now. (They buy from us at half price and sell us for twice what the goods are worth. That is what happens far from towns and commercial centers, in the poor countries where there is a rich man; there is no one else there to sell to or buy from.) At each mouthfull of bread they will think, in spite of themselves, what are the hands that made the bread that we are eating? And the conscience! Money cannot protect them against that; it will oblige them to improve in spite of themselves. That is the reason that made me undertake the work.

68. And even if that commandment only makes a slight impression on your mind, O you, people of the

learned class, you would still make a great effort to eat only the bread of your own work, for you would reason thus: Amongst the poor people, amongst the laborers, not only the strong suffer in reaping the wheat, but even the women on the point of being delivered are obliged to work also. It is thus that the child, while yet in its mother's womb suffers already for the bread which it has not tasted. The little babies, in their cradle, suffer from the wind and the insects, and all their body is burned by the sun. The children of seven years work also according to their strength; the old men of seventy who can not stoop down are obliged to get onto their knees to reap. It is thus at times, even now, but before, during the days of slavery it was a great deal worse. All of those families draw their life from the earth and die with it, according to the precept: "You are dust and you will return to the dust." In a word, parasites are unknown to them. Think that over a little, learned men.

69 But with us, you will say then, a man of thirty, enjoying excellent health, remains constantly, even in summer whistling with his hands in his pockets, waiting for the poor martyrs to put the bread between his teeth.

With us, with the laborers, on the contrary, not only in summer, but even in midwinter, our shirts are often soaked with sweat.

Throughout Christianity the first and most important of the sacraments is baptism. But, tell me, which washes off sin the most effectively? Is it the water of baptism, or the sweat that flows from our brow during our entire life devoted to the work of the bread?

Here is a proverb which you often hear quoted: "The frock of the moujik is grey, but the devil has not eaten his reason." The proverb is not correct, for I am certain that I will never have an answer to any of my questions, and still I am always questioning. You see there-

fore the devil has eaten my reason.—It is certain that with our narrow mind we can not penetrate the secret of impulsion which God gives the world, but we must believe as much as we can that you were washed once at your birth in baptismal water, but since then no work ever made you perspire.

As to myself, I was never washed by the baptismal water; that is why I must, during my whole life be bathed in sweat. And still which of us two is the more clean? Is it you, who are baptized, or I, who am not? ⁶

Do you see now what falseness can do? At every word, at every step it obliges you to bend down before me, who am naught but a feeble man. It is possible that you may overcome me, but it will only be by your power to which I cannot resist; but to destroy these arguments by proving their falseness you will never be able.

During 6,884 years we have been silent before you, but now we have pronounced a word which you had never heard even in dreams. I do not count on you but on your conscience. I hope that it will come to my help.

70. There are in the world many inventions that surprise the mind. To produce an object, however small it may be, machines have been invented. A work that required several men, a machine does it now far better than any man's hand.

But bread labor is still at the point where the peasants found it in ancient times.

71. It would be easy for an inventor to say these simple words: "Do this or do that," and men and beasts would be delivered from the irksome toil.

But no. He does not wish to go near to the work which he abhors, nor to those who accomplish it. He has no pity for the poor martyrs—I mean the laborers—he has no pity either for the animals, while several times

a day he eats the bread, or rather the blood and tears of the poor and of the beasts.

That is how, O you, the high society, you insult us, and how, at the same time you disobey the commandment and God who gave it.

Does your conduct not show plainly the hatred you have for God and for your brothers? Well, what have you to say? You cannot justify yourself before the moujik, and you have no excuse to give.

72. Here are other facts that prove that you lower and trample on everything. When some one makes a little discovery, you honor him with a medal bearing the inscription: "Honor to work and to arts." Has it ever happened that a reward has been given for the work and the art of making bread? No. But if anyone received one it would be some land owner, who sows a thousand acres with the hands of others, and who never goes near the shameful work or those who accomplish it. Those are the ones who have received and always will receive the rewards!

73. What happens in the dwellings of the poor? The husband and wife must not only feed themselves, but also a dozen children and their old parents. They sell you part of their bread, or rather they give it to you.

Well, although there have been several million of them in each century, has one of them ever received a reward of any kind? Never. But what am I saying? Far from receiving rewards, they have received the name of moujik, which means "stupid."

That must be enough for you, peasants!

It is easy to see that there is not a worse work on the face of the earth than bread labor; and that is due to society. Was I not right in saying that you love neither God nor your brothers, but only yourselves?

It is annoying to see that the millionaire has received for a few small things a number of medals, and walks around with his hands in his pockets, as if to say, "Look at me!"

But what is his merit compared with ours? Nothing but ashes scattered by the wind. What can be done? "God is in heaven and the Czar is afar!" But if I can I will note down all of my complaints and hand them to the Czar myself, and, having lost or won everything, we will only have the choice between life and death. I have started on the right road. I will continue to follow it until my death; for I have no reason for deceiving myself. I have one foot on earth and the other in the grave, and I am over sixty.

74. When my works will be read to a laborer knowing neither *a* nor *b*, how well he will understand them! How well the words will penetrate into his soul! How grateful he will be for having been taught the law of salvation! How hurriedly he will promise to work more than ever!

But he who avoids work is, on the contrary, like the dog that chews the stone you throw at him. He criticises every reflection, and he hates me, me who wrote them. Lastly he threatens me with suffering for the future.

Why is there such a difference between those two men? Because from the laborer to his superiors the distance is such that their opinions will never be the same.

But what did God wish to make me?

He gave us the law, that is, bread labor. The work is not difficult, but easy and useful; it is no long, but short and easily understood. How could we help being grateful to him?

But what has happened in the world? One half of the men run towards that work, while the other half avoid it, like a deadly poison, and hide away in solitary spots that they may not see it. Who are those who fly and hide? The ignorant, perhaps? No, the most learned and intelligent. Those who do not believe in God, perhaps? No, the true believers.

75. Your principal objection against bread labor is: Whatever may be the occupation of a man, whatever his work, he obeys this commandment: "You will knead your bread with the sweat of your brow." That explanation can suit neither God nor man.

It has been said: "Your earth will be cursed in its products." Is there any allusion there to your occupation? No.

And again: "Be in affliction every day of your life." In these words bread labor is not plainly spoken of. And again: "You will cultivate the thistles and the briars. Is there any allusion there to your constant occupations? And again: "You will eat the grass of the fields." Is there, I ask it once more, the slightest allusion to your occupations? No.

Lastly: "You will knead your bread with the sweat of your brow, you are dust and you will return to dust."

Well, the learned find another subterfuge and pretend that it is not only to the plow that the words are applied but also to their pen and they give strong reasons for it.

76. But is it possible that God has given to us alone that irksome duty of working the earth, while he would have ordered you to avoid it with the help of your money?

"In my house," says the rich man, "the money works for the bread."

It is not so. Money has not sinned against God. That commandment was never pronounced against money.

And then money does not eat bread; it is therefore not obliged to work. "How can you say then, money works in my house!" Do you think yourself perfectly pure in the eyes of God that you need no commandment? But were you even more saintly than the Saint of Saints, you do eat nevertheless the bread made by others.

Really, you must not hope to escape alive from the hands of an adversary such as me.

Here is another excuse you offer: "If everybody were occupied with agriculture, all of the manufactories must stop and the universe will die." Nothing is more false. There will be, for a fact, eighty hollidays during which all occupations will be interrupted and every man will spend eighty other days in idleness. Do you think that because a husband and his wife work an acre for thirty days at various times of the year, do you think that the world will come to an end? Why should it be?

"In all large cities, especially in Moscow, where there is a large number of manufactories, there is about a million of inhabitants. Where would the ground be found if every one was to cultivate the ground?"

That is another excuse of those who avoid work.

I will say in answer to that objection that the manufacturers went of their own accord or were obliged to go to the towns. But could the factories not be established in open ground, where some could perform bread labor and others work in the factory, make money, and where they could change about? All that could be easily done if you wished to help the lower classes. But you think only of yourselves and those like you.

You leave the said bread labor because there is not much earth and because if every one began to work there would not be space enough? If you ever did begin to work you would plow up all of the earth.

As to myself, I have ten acres of wheat, but if the revolution took place, I would be satisfied with five; and the other five, it is you, my friend, who would plow them up with those white hands of yours in spite of the heat or the frost, in bad weather or in the snow, even if you were shaking with fever and your hands were like spider's claws.

Is it admissible that we alone should endure all of that trouble?

79. If you are so thoroughly convinced that we eat the bread of your work, why do you sell it to us? We do not oblige you to. You come and ask us to buy it. Is it our fault?

If all the laborers were familiar with the primitive law, they would not sell their bread and would only give it in certain admissible cases, as many of them do already. But where would they get their money? They will know how to find it.

The lazy man, like the door on its hinges, remains all his life lying on the down of his bed. He has never seen how bread is worked. That is why, by the time he has read ten articles of my book, he pushes it away saying, "That is vitriol!" The verdict seems deep and well deserved.

He is not the one who found that word; Providence was speaking through his mouth, because for him the bread of his own work is vitriol, while the bread of the work of others is sweeter than honey.

You see, readers, how much falseness loves itself. And if it did not find itself amiable, to whom would it seem pleasant and virtuous?

80. "Why is falseness called by the name of falseness?" I said one day to myself, thinking about the capitalist. It should have been better named, for it is more truthful than truth itself; it unveils and betrays itself.

It has been said: "The voice of your brother's blood cries towards me from the earth." Thus God spoke to Cain, to the voice of falseness. If it cried towards God, why did it remain silent towards the world? "And God marked Cain with the sign of criminals." Does he not, even now, mark all the wicked men with that sign, and, with them, the lazy man who has become my best teacher and to whom I will be eternally grateful?

81. You do not answer. You must agree with me, then.

Here is, however, the answer you could present and the objection you could make, in reality, against bread labor: "I can not do several things at once. If I am busy with agriculture, I will not have time to think of anything else."

But I will answer in my turn: "I have, outside of the bread, many things to do. How is it that I who am an ignorant moujik, I can handle it all, make decisions and execute them rapidly? If I were as intelligent as you, I would handle several thousands of matters. Why then, being so infinitely bright, can you think of but a single matter?"

82. When you are avoiding bread labor, or when your conscience is tormenting you, you say to yourself: "If we were all performing bread labor—where would the poor people get their money, who live by their labor? They give us bread, but in exchange, we give them money, and thus the peasants live, thanks to us, and we, thanks to them. The hand washes the hand and they are both white."

No, your argument does not disconcert us. We are not as stupid as you think, and you, yourself, you are not as intelligent as you believe. Do not forget that the man you are speaking to is the one who remains on the threshold of your palace (like Lazarus).

One half of the living beings does not perform bread labor and knows where to get the money; the other half, working it and not selling it, can hardly suffice to its own needs. And still it knows where to find money. During a bad crop there are entire districts which do not sell, but buy; and they know where to find money. But why should the second half not learn where to find money, if everybody performed bread labor?

Far from being useful, the sale of bread is injurious. This year the crop is good and the farmer sells his wheat to the rich man for fifty kopeks the measure. He thinks that what wheat he has left will be sufficient for his needs. But let us suppose that the crop is bad the next year, and there is a famine. He will buy his wheat back from the same man for a rouble and fifty kopeks per measure and if he has not enough money to pay for it, he will give him his cattle at half price. Thus he has not sufficient for his own needs, he has sold his wheat, he has, lost his cattle, and, all told, he is reduced to beggary forever. That is the way in which many ruin themselves by selling their wheat. How can you then say that the peasants can only live with the sale of their wheat and that without it, they would starve to death? The real conclusion is, that you are living on others. Your money is the money of our work, and whatever you have belongs to us.

Plow, according to the commandment, a single acre of wheat, and everything will belong to you.

83. It happens to me not to have a single cent, sometimes for two months. However, when I am tired from working all day, I make my tura (bread crumbled into kvass): I eat well; the tura tastes better to me than your delicate food; then I sing as I return to work.

But you, if you remained two months without my bread, what songs would you sing?

Now examine well, reader, which of us two lives the more on the other. Is it you or I? It is you

In that case why do you count yourself as one of my friends? Which of us two should occupy the first seat at table? I should most certainly. But why have you taken it? Who showed you the seat and did you the honor?

Protect yourself with reasonable answers, or else do not eat our bread. Or, if you consent to, plow with your hands a single acre of ground and sit down. Otherwise begone.

84. It seems to me that your answers will be the same as those of the rich man who said: I would like to work, but I know not how. Once only in my life have I held a scythe in my hand; I swung it as hard as I could, but it only bent the grass over. Then I went still harder, and it cut into the ground. After that I took a sickle, and after a long torture, I had hardly reaped half a sheaf, but I had cut my hand. That is what happened to me one day when I was in the fields. And then if I was going to work in earnest, all of my companions would look at me and laugh at the strange sight.

But why do you know how to eat? I asked. Before you were two years old you could eat already, and now you are old and do not know how to work yet!

And I said besides: Is it from lack of strength or from lack of will that you do not know how to work?

85. The rich man gave me besides the following excuses: 1. I would work the bread, according to the commandment; but I am ashamed; I would be pointed at. 2. Is it right for a rich man like myself to work with the poor? 3. All intelligent and learned men would exclude me from their society. 4. By working the bread I could earn but thirty kopeks, while at home with my pen I could earn ten roubles.

Such are the reasons for which the learned class has rejected the work in which it sees nothing but losses and humiliation.

86. But, they add, will we be guilty in the eyes of God? No, for Jesus-Christ told us, while he was dying for us, not to sin and not to fulfill the commandment, which means not to work for the bread; for he said: "Look at the birds of the sky, etc.," That is why we do not work the bread and never will do it.

87. But if you are redeemed, I answered, why do you eat the fruit of the work of others? Can it be possible that God has redeemed you without redeeming us? If he had redeemed mankind, he should have ordered the wheat to grow ready kneaded and cooked to suit the taste of each one, or else he should have sent us manna from heaven, as he sent it to the Israelites in the desert.

It is evident that he has not redeemed man neither from the sin, nor from the commandment which is the bread labor. But each one of us must redeem himself by his actions, and not count on the merit of others, I mean of Christ.

88. We sin, we disobey the divine precepts and we incur consequently the curses given in the Deuteronomy. According to your view it is not thus. You seem to think that Jesus Christ takes on himself all of our sins and curses. What a fine invention! And how exact your idea is! No, each one must redeem himself by adhering to the primitive commandment: "Eat the bread of your work." There is no greater virtue, and to disdain it is the most dangerous of crimes.

89. If you are rich, live in luxury as much as you can, be as proud as you wish, have as fine a table as you can desire, but do not avoid the bread labor, do better even and hasten to accomplish it.

90. Between the rich and the poor there is always a great and implacable enmity. But when they meet face to face, they dissimulate. Whence comes that hatred? Are the rich or the poor to be blamed for it? According to Sirach: "What can there be in common between a saint and a dog (impious, a sinner)? And what can bind a rich man to a poor?

"Just as humility is abominated by the proud, so has the rich a horror for the poor."

Whose fault is it, that of the rich and not of the poor laborers?

I have asked it before and I ask it again: do not forget that I who remain on the threshold of rich palaces like Lazarus I am speaking in the name of the laborers, to you of the high classes, and not to you alone, reader.

91. It will be said: So and so works ten times more than the laborer; can he be called lazy?

On holidays the former works and the latter remains in bed, useful neither to himself, to his brothers nor to God. It is said that in that case the lazy man does his duty, while the laborer commits a crime by breaking the fourteenth commandment. Is that case not the same as that which we are considering?

During three hundred and thirty days of the year, do whatever you please, but during thirty-five days, at various times of the year, every man should work at the bread.

92. But why am I so long when a few words should be enough? It is because it is necessary to throw a strong obstacle in the way of the subterfuges behind which you intrench yourself, and, for that, I need to make a long answer to your numerous arguments.

Since there is for God neither past nor future, and that everything appears as present, is it possible that

He has not understood that if man must always eat bread, he must also continue to work? If He was prescribing an atonement for your sins and said: "Take this stone of a hundred pounds and carry it," you would answer: "My God, I cannot, for you have not given me strength enough." Or else if He said: "Fly through the air like a bird," you would answer: "You have given me no wings and it is impossible for me to do what you order." Your excuse would be legitimate.

But why can you not work the bread? "In truth," you will answer, "it is simply owing to my situation, I have white and delicate hands and the straw would prick my skin."

94. You avoid again the work of bread labor because, you say, by keeping occupied with any work, one is obeying the commandment: "Knead your bread with the sweat of your brow."

One says: "I have written to-day nine hundred and ninety-one lines, therefore I have eaten my bread with the sweat of my brow." Another: "I have given to-day a few orders to my people, I watched to see that they worked well for me, therefore I eat my bread with the sweat of my brow." A third: "I took a drive to-day in town in a handsome carriage; I therefore eat my bread with the sweat of my brow." A fourth: "I sold to-day some spoiled goods, and I cheated a greenhorn; I am eating my bread with the sweat of my brow."

And the thief says in his turn:

"I did not sleep all night, I worked with my hands; I am eating my bread, more than any of you, with the sweat of my brow."

If it is not by truth, it will at least be by eloquence and skill that they all gain their cause, as says Kriloff, * "The

* Kriloff (Ivan Andreievitch), fabulist, born in a little village of Orenburg in 1768, died at Saint Petersburg in 1864. Attracted by the

animals who are armed with claws or teeth are all innocent; they are almost saints, but the timid ox is accused. The tigers and the wolves cry against him; they smother and then sacrifice him.

It seems as if Kriloff describes in the animals the laborers and that the ox is the timid rich man. What do you think of it, reader?

95. You who eat the bread of our work, you are in Russia about thirty millions, including the Jews and the Gypsies. How could we feed you all, give you handsome clothes, allow you to sleep in a good bed with a warm blanket over you?

Still it is to do that that we work night and day, and that we endure all kinds of privations.

Is it not unjust? Is it not criminal on your part?

96. And, as if you had not heard what I have said, you answer: "Of what injustice are you the victims and what crime have we committed? We do not take your

theatre from his youth, he composed a play called the "Coffee-pot," (1783), and several comedies and tragedies, of which the most important are "Cleopatra" and "Philomelee."

But that was not his real vocation. In 18400, following the advice of one of his friends, who seemed to have had a presentiment of his real talent, he translated two fables of Lafontaine: the "Daughter," and the "Oak and the Willow"; his translation drew a great deal of attention by its originality and its picturesque character.

Published in the "Spectator of Moscow," they had a great success. From that time on Kriloff devoted all of his time to the composition of fables and became the Lafontaine of Russia, imitating the French Lafontaine.

However in the hands of Kriloff all of the subjects become Russian.

He differs also from Lafontaine and Lessing by his cutting jokes and even by his cynicism, so highly appreciated in Moscow. His complete fables form a large book.

The fable quoted by Bondareff is an imitation of "The Animals Suffering With The Pest" of Lafontaine.

bread for nothing, but we buy it with the money we earn by our work."

"And where did you take that money?"

"I earned it by working according to the commandment."

"But does not our money come from our work? Money is not given for nothing, it must be earned by the body of flesh and bone." And then can you redeem sin with money? Can you buy God's law with money?"

Your excuse condemns you still more. You can buy whatever you please with money, but bread you can buy it at no price.

97. Do you think yourself saved by the blessed bread which you receive in church from the hands of the priest? "But," you will answer, "it is not the bread that saves me, it is my belief in Christ whom I receive under the shape of bread." No, the belief without the good actions, without the commandment, is dead. You go to church and return with two, because you have eaten the bread of the work of others. "Where?" you will ask. "In church."

98. Not only, O rich people, you live on the work of others, but you even hope that in future life you will enjoy eternal happiness, thanks to the merits of another—of Christ. That is why you think that you have no duty to accomplish and believe that you have nothing to do but to enjoy the goods of this world. You are walking on a wide road, but where will it lead you to? You know it as well I do.

99. Amongst you one can often find men who, when fortune turns against them and takes away their wealth, when the circumstances oblige them to work the bread themselves, are overcome by despair, become thieves and drunkards, and head all kinds of criminal undertakings. And, usually, they die a violent death in

order to escape the bread labor. But resurrect that commandment of which you only see the reality when you come to die, and then the millionaire, being in the same situation as you, will not avoid the work but will accomplish the work willingly.

100. Let us speak now, reader, of the three kinds of men: Of the Jew, the Gypsy, and of the learned European, who, like the first two, eats the bread of the work of others. Which is the one who displeases the most God and the living beings?

It is certainly the European, for there is nothing to be said of the Gypsy who is half wild. As to the Jew, he was once the master of the world, and obliged all others to do bread labor; but now that time is no longer. To-day the Jew has become the tail from the head that he was, and, like the first two, he eats the the bread of the work of others.

I ask which of those three men seems the most intolerable God and to man.

101. I know that the reader will answer this: "Can I be compared to the Jew and the Gypsy. I live on truth and they on lies and duplicity." "Yes, if you had the body of an angel and not that of a man. But when you eat the bread of the work of others, there is not in that food a single atom of truth. It has been about two hours since you have eaten, and you are already thinking of holding out your hand towards the same tree of life, towards the bread which you are really not allowed to taste. How can you then pride yourself on saying the truth?"

102. From all of the arguments that precede it is easy to conclude that there is nothing more infamous than the bread of other people's work. On the contrary, there is nothing more sacred, nothing more wholesome, than the bread of one's own work. That is not a suppo-

sition I am making, but an assertion which I draw from from the fundamental laws of God, with which our natural law is in perfect accord.

103. I have said that, according to your view, the lazy and idle life was the one indicated by the law of salvation. I did not give at the time proofs enough. But now I will prove it unquestionably. (We will not speak of those who live day by day, taking things as they come.)

To win eternal happiness, the servants of God retire to monasteries, deserts, mountains or islands, where they lead a wandering life.

What are they looking for in those spots, those who trample under foot the divine law, who eat the bread of the work of others?

Can one not be virtuous while accomplishing the work blessed by God?

104. When the crop is bad the poor is sad; the rich, on the contrary, is happy because the famine will help him to increase his wealth. That is why he calls the famine "the mercy," and the good crop "the punishment" of God. And if he takes part on the complaints of the poor, do not believe him, the hypocrite, he is lying.

105. And you say that the two classes are not each other's enemies!

The rich will immediately offer this excuse: "What does my wealth amount to? There are people who are a hundred times more wealthy than I am; it is to them that you must attribute all of the misfortunes which you accuse me of causing."

To that I will answer: Wealth must not be measured by its amount, but by the number of peasants who surround the rich, for, in the country those who have five thousand roubles are more wealthy than the millionaire of Moscow.

But if you could see, reader of the city, the misfortunes which the rich man heaps onto the poor in the country, you would think more of my arguments. Otherwise you will never believe me.

106. The poor, the laborer, thinks day and night, during his whole life, of the best way of preparing his field for the wheat, of his cattle and his instruments. From their childhood he accustomed his children to the same work. His efforts are crowned with success. On the contrary, the rich man thinks day and night of the way of buying from the poor at half price and selling back to him for twice what the goods are worth, and he accustoms his sons, from their childhood to those speculations.

The first and the last of the laws imposed by God concern work, the principal of which is bread labor; but the intelligent and learned people have endeavored to avoid work, and live with their hands in their pockets like pomestchiks. They have loaded everything onto the poor and the weak; but the latter do not lose their coolness; they rob, kill, burn and deceive each other.

It is really well done. As says the proverb, the boss is for his bread (meaning his interest), and the workman is as cunning as his boss; for, if intelligent people hide away the light, there is no reason why we should leave it there. Act then as best you can, laborer.

107. Still the poor is very humble before you, O rich man. And if, besides that you are deceitful with him, he falls alive into your hands.

It is thus that the poor goes to the rich and returns half naked. Sirach says rightly: "The lion is the game of the savages in the desert; likewise the poor are the food of the rich."

Here is what happens generally in the poor regions where a rich man has taken root. The poor must buy

everything from him and sell everything to him.

And the rich man says besides: "The business which I am doing is honest and loyal. Every sale is an understanding on both sides. Do you or do you not wish to buy from me and sell to me? Trade is not a sin. I have neither false weights nor false measures; I never deceive in the accounts. And really it is only right to say that I eat my bread by the sweat of my brow."

How can one argue with him! All that he says is very insulting for us. He does not understand the meaning of the commandment, otherwise his conscience would begin to speak in him.

109. And again the rich give the following excuse: "I give men money to have them work for me. My interest would be to give them no work, but I do just the same. And therefore I hope to be rewarded by God. And then if it were not for me, where would they find the money that they need?" I answer: "You should make a better use of the wealth you have accumulated by working, by obeying the commandment I have spoken of; you should wash yourself with clean and not with dirty water. But you pretend to help men with the result of their work. And who earned the money that you give them? Is it your money? No, it belongs to those workmen. What do you then hope to be rewarded for?"

110. It is said in the law: "Such the workman, such the work; such the earth, such the fruits: "in other words, if we are, according to you, ignorant moujiks and useless factors in society, why do you like our work, the bread? Believe me, reader, if I were as intelligent and as learned as you, I would never eat bread, but I would always eat money, and, with gold, I—

111. Each one of you will say: "I love and respect the workman and bread labor, I have nothing but

hatred and contempt for idleness." To those assertions I will answer by the proverb: "I hear the voice of Jacob and I go unto Esau."

112. We should not give a single grain of wheat. "Why so?" the reader will ask. Because one half of humanity will not go near the work of the earth, and the other half only works in spite of itself, not knowing where to seek refuge, so full is the world of laziness. Where three or four men would suffice, ten or fifteen arrive, and not having eaten for a day or two, crowd one on top of the other. If one is repulsed he becomes the most terrible of robbers and criminals.

113. I repeat that we should not give a single grain of wheat. Let us except only the women who fulfil exactly the commandment of God which we quoted, also the aged men who have worked before, but who have lost their strength, the crippled and the children who will work in the future. Oh, heaven, listen to my prayer! Give us for them an abundance of the fruits of the earth.

114. "Do not do unto others what you do not wish to have done unto yourself." That is the law. It is well, and, as for myself, I do not believe there are any other virtues. But, let me ask, the question, if you do not wish to have the others eat the bread of your work, why do you eat the bread of their work; in other words, why do you do to others what you would not have done to yourself?

"I buy my bread with money."

"Very well then; you have always the same song on your lips, and it sets my teeth on edge."

115. Have I not said before that bread can not be bought at any price, that it can be bought only by work, for its price can not be settled by the human mind. In certain legitimate cases it must be given and

taken. But you have arrived at this result that in certain towns of Russia, a measure of bread costs no more than a measure of dry muck.

How ignominious! At the sole recollection of that insult which we endured, I feel a cold shiver run through me.

But for you, rich people, nothing is cheaper than the bread. Everything is as it should be. That is what you call *law*.

116. Have pity on us, O you of the high classes! Do not annihilate my words. If they are illegal, only crush my own person; but allow my work to remain in the archives where you leave the most important State papers. There may be found in the future generation some man sufficiently just to publish all that. Let me die alone, if only the millions of laborers who live after me can have a great joy and find some relief in their toil.

117. In spite of the studying you have done from your childhood until old age, consider how large the distance is that separates you from a good, ignorant laborer: One step! A man of the higher class, but of inferior degree, a public functionary and a man of our class, the *starckina*, (the magistrate of a canton) unite to make an inquiry in view of a proposed lawsuit. The canton gives the functionary a few cases of wine and he consents to arrange everything. He changes the facts and hands a false report to his superior who notices nothing uncommon, and signs the papers. Thus the innocent man has become the guilty and vice versa; and that through the complicity of the superior with the inferior.

118. But why was he deceived? Because not only he does not work the bread, but he does not even know how it is done. But if besides science he was familiar with bread labor, his intelligence would be so

enlightened that he could not be deceived. You see how many faults and mistakes are caused by idleness.

119. Here is what the talented writers do: If they have to criticise a superior they soften their words and tell him the fable of the geese of Kriloff: "I might have insisted more on the fable," he says, "but I did not want to irritate the geese."

In other words, he has not told him the truth out and out, but he has beaten around the bush.

But I, whether it be through clumsiness or through love of the truth, I irritate the geese. What do you think of it, reader?

They will strike me with their beaks until they kill me. What does it matter: whatever it may cost me, I can not remain silent, I will not draw the veil of hypocrisy over my thought. But since I have started on the right road, I will continue to follow it until my death. I will wander neither to the right nor to the left.

There is a book called Civil Marriage. I have never read it, but I know that in it the pomestchik Novosseslky complains of a peasant before his wife: "Just imagine," says he, "that villainous servant put a cold shirt on me!" (I can not help laughing as I copy this complaint) "I scold him and he answers: 'I always put a cold shirt on your father the general.'"

That trait astounded me. Laziness has overpowered man to such an extent that he finds intolerable the obligation of putting on his own shirt.

We must conclude that if he were shown the everlasting fire in which he will burn eternally with his descendants, as says the Christian tradition, he would prefer to be plunged into it rather than pick up a straw or a grain of wheat.

Into what are men cast by laziness, idleness and luxury? But speak to the wealthy of the divine commandment, and he will eloquently oppose to you a hundred arguments to prove that he eats his bread with the sweat of his brow.

121. I would like to ask (but I know not who to turn to) if it is possible that the pomestchiks have had their shirts put on them. "Nothing is more true," I hear on all sides: "they have even had their drawers drawn on as if they were dead." But what are they doing with their hands meanwhile?

That is an instance of laziness one could never have imagined if it had not been true.

122. How they have suffered, the slave-peasants! The recollection alone of their sorrows is painful to me. When I think of it, it makes me shudder. It would have been far better for them never to have been born. Even had I several tongues and tried my best to say everything, it would be impossible for me to expose all the calamities which befell them, all the tortures which those martyrs endured.

Human lips can not express their suffering. But I will tell you the outrage that we are enduring. It may be that you, who are reading me, are a pomestchik yourself. But I shall tell the truth nevertheless, that no one can accuse me of falsehood. And then I have been myself a laborer with a pomestchik on the Don.

123. Three days a week the peasant works for himself; on the three other days he works with all of his family for the pomestchik. His wife, his children hardly twelve years old, old people of sixty even worked for their own existence and for the keeping of the animals. The instruments of labor, the plow, the wagon, the harrows, the scythes, the axes, etc., all of that must be bought by the peasant.

If he had done any involuntary damage while working for the pomestchik, he must have everything repaired at his own cost. He must thrash the wheat in a field far from all houses, and it is there that, in spite of the cold, he must work all day for the pomestchik. Many worked half naked and tortured by hunger; but what did it matter, they had to work for the pomestchik. Was it not a torture? Add to that that those people have no protector.

124. Three days for yourself and three days for the pomestchik; a year for yourself and a year for the pomestchik; such is the life of the peasant. But of the year during which he works for himself there must first be deducted eighty days that are holidays, for those people are very religious, then eighty other days of rest caused by accidents in the work. And then the peasant is not a stone that it may happen to him to be ill, if it is only fifty days in two years. There only remains, then, one hundred and fifty-five days of work for himself.

125. I want to know whether, in that case, he can, in a hundred and fifty-five days of work, supply his numerous needs for two years, during the present year and the following one, during which he will work for the pomestchik. Remember that he must besides scrape together some money to pay the yearly tax, the cost of recruits and the personal assessment. If the husband or wife happen to die, there remain about a dozen young children; to-day he has the funeral, and to-morrow he must go back to work for the pomestchik.

126. Besides that the pomestchik sends to the peasants for various things: chickens, geese, eggs, butter, etc. He notes what is given to him and those who do not give are tormented; and there is not a soul to whom they can complain. Try to speak to him of the com-

mandment. Before you have said two words he will interrupt you with a shower of arguments and prove to you that, according to the commandment, he eats his bread with the sweat of his brow, and that, on the contrary, the peasants are idlers and parasites.

There may be good pomestchiks in the world, but I can assert that on the banks of the Don they are all like the one I have just described.

127. "Is it allowable," you will say, "to insult thus the benefactors who feed you, or, in other words to return evil for good, hatred for love?"

But how can you always praise yourselves, and proclaim that no one is more just and merciful than you are.

128. It will be said to me: "The pomestchik can be a virtuous man."

Of course he can, if he only accomplishes himself the work of his bread. But it has never been known to happen, and never will be.

In the eyes of the real believer, the principal way of redeeming one's sins is to receive the holy communion. But, from the primitive commandment of God, the abolition which consists in doing personally bread labor is a thousand times better. But the millionaire has paid twenty kopeks for a pound of wheat and he has obeyed the commandment!

129. It has been said and is still said that the lot of the peasant slaves of the pomestchiks is preferable to that of the peasant of the state.

That is simply said because we are not believed, although there are thousands of us and each one can prove the contrary a thousand times.

But the pomestchik is alone and he will only have to say that the peasants placed under his protection are more happy than those of the state, and his words will be believed.

130. All that is over, slavery is suppressed, but the pain which the sight of those infamies caused me has not yet disappeared and will long leave traces in my soul.

Up to the age of sixty the peasant worked for the pomestchik; deduct the thirteen years of childhood and there remain forty-seven years, of which twenty-four were devoted to working for the pomestchik and the remaining twenty-three for himself.

Try, now, to hire a peasant of the state and tell him: "Work a year for me with your wife, your children and your beasts; life, clothes, implements, etc., everything will be at your own cost; if you injure anything while working for me, you will be held accountable for it." For what price will that peasant consent to work for a year?

He will ask at least five hundred rubles, which would make, for twenty-four years, eleven thousand, five hundred rubles.

Such is the amount which the pomestchik has stolen, if not in money, at least in work, from the peasant who has lived all his life in his service.

And that money, the pomestchik has lost it at cards or used it to satisfy various fancies of the same kind.

Tell me why he has taken that money? Did the peasant owe it to him! No. He might have had some reason for acting thus? No, none. Then why did he take such a large amount from him? For nothing.

131. Throughout the universe complaints are arising against God. If God's kindness is infinite, why all the persecution that is inflicted on the poor?

If God governs the world righteously, whence comes the inequality between men? Why is sin happy and virtue unhappy?

But is it the fault of the mirror if our face is ugly; in other words, is it God's fault if we have rejected his law, the respect for which would re-establish equality amongst all mortals?

132. Impose the law that no one shall eat the bread of the work of others, unless it be for legitimate reasons, and, from then on, men will not be equal, but they would at least be nearer to each other. The work of the bread will clip the wings of those who try to soar too high.

We are poor through your wealth, and you are rich through our poverty.

133. Our great-grandfathers, our grandfathers, our fathers, our ancestors in a word, have worked, and we also, you see it, work until old age. All that they have earned by their work they have left to their children and the latter to theirs.

But why am I not rich then, even if I had laid nothing aside? I own as little as owned my great-grandfather, less perhaps.

134. Has our family been composed of idlers and drunkards? "No, never," said my grandfather. Perhaps all of my possessions have been destroyed by a fire or a flood? No, not that either. Nothing of all that has happened.

135. But then, I will ask, what has become of all of our work? What thief has stolen all of our fortune? But where does all of your wealth come from, O rich man? Answer me loyally.

136. If only the injury done us was but momentary, but it is eternal! Just like the past generations, the present ones must suffer from privation. It will never have a protector. But all of that happens only because we have nailed up in his coffin, our father, the commandment.

137. That is only what I caught a glimpse of during all of my life, and what I see clearly to-day, after having meditated for years on the meaning of the first commandment: throughout the universe the peasantry go to the fields and do bread-labor, helped by the youngest of their children. The babies who are not weaned yet, and have not yet tasted the bread, are suffering also for the bread. Would not the sight of all those people remind one of bees, swarming through the fields and gathering the honey on their way?

And on seeing the people of the high classes, I have compared them to the drones who buzz, who do not work, and only know how to eat the work of others.

Many thieves are arrested in the world; they are not thieves, but rather mischievous people, whereas I have found a thief, a true thief! He has stolen God and the church; he has robbed us of the primitive law, that which belonged to all of us laborers. But I want to show you that thief himself. He who does not work his own bread and eats the bread of the work of others, he is the thief; arrest him and judge him. He has carefully buried the commandment of God, and in seven thousand three hundred and ninety years no one has been able to discover it. He has stolen innumerable millions from the poor people, and he abandoned them with their children half naked and famished, while he elevated himself by that means higher than the sky.

138. The honey bees cut the wings of the bumble bees, to prevent them from eating the honey of their work. Your turn has arrived, parasites, and we cut your wings that you might not eat the bread of our work. I know very well that you will continue to eat it, but when you carry the bread to your lips, conscience will clutch your throat and nothing can deliver you from its grasp. If bread could be had by cunning, as

all else, it would be hidden and left in some safe place, and all would be for the best. But bread can not be hidden: it must be eaten immediately.

That is worth thinking of.

139. Now you of the rich classes, you who elevate yourselves unto the skies, remember that you imprisoned yourselves in the bonds of impiety which you have not the strength to cast aside, you see yourselves cast into a gulf from which you can not escape, unless God draws out of you the tyrant Laziness and his friend Luxury.

We therefore beg that you restore to us the treasure which God created especially for us, and which is the fundamental law of humanity; in other words, declare it everywhere. Then we will enrich you, we will load you down with gold, because hoping as we will for salvation, not only the bread labor, but every other work will seem easy to us.

The most weak-minded men and the children themselves, hearing the text of that law, will understand that it is the first one given by God to the first men and that it is more important than all of the other virtues, than all of the other commandments. They will then say to themselves: "I must work still more than before, therefore I will willingly spend my life in the fields that I may deserve happiness in the other world."

Return to us then, O wealthy people, the treasure which you, or rather your ancestors, have stolen and hidden, restore to us the most sacred of our possessions, the gift which we have from God.

Before my eyes were opened, all of the prescriptions, all of the laws transmitted to us by tradition seemed important to me. But to-day they seem insignificant because this single commandment: "Knead your

bread," etc., has taken possession of my intelligence and of my heart.

The result will be that, if it is proclaimed, the clergy will be deprived of bread; for now it eats without working, and no one has any right to blame it for its laziness. But then each one would tell the clergy what he thought of it.

141. When I laid aside my manuscript after copying the preceding article (for it took me six months to copy my work at my spare moments), they came to ask us to lend some bread to the town of Krasmoiarsk. The inhabitants of our village, veritable Jews, have, by a vote of the county assembly, granted fifty measures of wheat from the store-house of the Mir. * Why did they give so little?

"Because the mare has eaten all of the bread." †

Several people congratulated the man who had taken the initiative of the proposition, but many were angry: "Fifty measures, fifty measures! but that is but twenty pounds for each house! Why give but twenty pounds for each house, they said to the assembly? It would be better to give nothing. While you are giving you must give at least two or three measures to each house, or even two bags."

142. You see, what I predicted has arrived. The bread must not be sold, but in certain admissible cases, it must be given for nothing. And it is being given while you are still hiding the commandment on bread labor. But if that first commandment was made known to all mankind without having it's impor-

* Store-house in which each family was called upon to pour one tenth of the crop for the poor.

† Russian proverb. It is one of the pretexts given for refusing to give alms.

tance hidden, the burned town of Krasmoiarsk would then receive from our single district of Manoussinsk several thousand measures of bread and each one would go to the spot to give the necessary help. It would be the same in every case, for no one would know what might happen to him on the next or even on the same day.

143. Ask, on the contrary, for money. They will give you none. 1st, because the peasant rarely has any; 2nd, because the voice of the commandment tells the laborer to give bread rather than anything else. And then money is a dead thing if it be compared to bread; it is worth no more than a stone. No one makes presents in money; the more money a person has, the more they wish to have. Take all of the money and all of the treasures of the world and give it to a single person: will he be satisfied and will his cupidity vanish? No. But what more could he want? Why will he not be satisfied? He will cry: "Why cannot I hold the entire world in my hands, why can I not hear every man and embrace in a single glance the entire universe. No matter which way I turn, nothing belongs to me."

144. But, I would answer, to do that one would have to live a thousand years, because, however wide and long you may be, you could never, in such a short time, absorb it all; you would smother. But bread is exactly the opposite of money; they are two enemies, just as the laborer is the enemy of the idler.

145. It is said that henceforth the taxes will be based upon the earth, meaning that the amount will be proportionate to the number of acres that each one owns. Why do you say "upon the earth?" Why not admit immediately that the laborers will be the only ones paying taxes. But here is some ground that is not cultivated; are you going to take from that the money and bread that you need? "According to the sentence of Him who created

me, that earth will say to you, I am waiting for some one to come and work me; if you come for aught else, begone, parasite."

Allow me to ask you why you want taxes from those who feed you with their bread, while those who never accomplish the work of the bread do not have to pay a single kopek? If at least the earth were free! But the state has taken it from us to give it to the pomestchiks, and they require from us ten times as much as it is worth. Whether the wheat grows or not, give us the money; but where shall we take it?

Although it has been said in the law: "Hold out your cheek to him who strikes, in view of the great injustices of which you are guilty towards us, I refuse you (and by I, I mean all of our class of laborers, young and old, children at the breast and, in general, all of those who suffer before being born, since their mothers work according to the primitive commandment while they are still in their wombs,) I refuse you, I say, the right of speaking, of wrangling about the bread and about the earth that produced it; be satisfied with talking of the stone and of the ground where grows nothing but the bitter absinthe.

If you really wanted to work and were not able, for various reasons, you would be excusable; but it is through laziness that you avoid work. In that case, why should you be forgiven? I know that you can not answer all of these questions. You say that you will have recourse to violence to procure your food. But will you be able to live, could you swallow a single mouthful of the bread you owed to your strength? No, no, that mouthful would smother you, body and soul, without paying any attention to your rank.

Have pity on us; since how many thousands of years have you been galloping on our backs like a horse! Look:

long since you have taken all of the flesh from the bone.

The bread you eat is in reality our body; and the wine you drink is in reality our blood.

146. When I understood the first commandment, here is what I did: in spite of my sixty-five years, in spite of my weakness and my thin arms, I worked the earth during the whole year (1881). Without any help I harrowed eight acres of fallow-land; I led the first horse of the plow; I worked the same earth over again and, though working in the fields all day, I took care of the horses at night. And in spite of all that I felt no fatigue. Lastly I brought in the wheat and the hay with my son and my daughter-in-law.

147. You see the result which that commandment can produce. Thanks to that law the old man becomes young, the weak is strong, the lazy diligent, the drunkard sober and the poor rich. Would I have done all that, would I have plowed so much earth, had I not known that I was digging up the spot where you hid the divine commandment? If people were aware of their own strength they would not stand such outrages. Would not man cast from him the horrible poverty that holds him now in its grasp?

148. If God sends an abundant crop to the eight acres of land which I plowed, we will have enough to satisfy us, my family and myself. Listen to this more, idle men, that I could still feed thirty men with the result of my work.

149. If you really wanted to work and were not able to for good reasons, you would be excusable before God and before man; but it is through laziness that you do not work: is it then possible to respect you? Never in any way. Before that a superior appeared to me a great personage, but now he is in my eyes the

least of men ; I would like to put that idea from me, but I cannot, it returns in spite of me.

I often hear that it is wished to reconcile all of humanity in a single religion. Is it so? I know not. But if it be true, I assert that instead of uniting them, it will divide them into as many different sects as to-day, and consequently your action would be more injurious than beneficial. It was easy to unite men in ancient times, while the race was still wild ; it could be led by a thread without fear of breaking it. But nowadays you might tie them together with a triple cord, you would not move them, in the first place on account of their habits, and also on account of the pride that prevents them from listening to each other.

But if you start a religion on the basis of the single primitive law, without giving any other rules, you will soon have the universe united. It is impossible to reach by any other means the union of which you dream.

150. From poverty to wealth there is but one step, and, the other way, the distance is still smaller. It is the same from the general to the soldier. Man does not know when and where his chariot will upset ; in other words, it may happen that to-day he owns a million and that to-morrow he is as poor as we, that to-day he is a general and to-morrow our equal.

151. This is then the line of conduct we must adopt.

Hasten to teach the child, however noble its family may be, the first commandment. When he has grown, teach him by your example bread labor. After that if misfortune ever falls to his lot, he will not even sigh, he will rush impetuously towards bread labor.

"For many years," he will cry, "I have wished to busy myself with this work, but I had not the strength to withstand fortune. To-day I thank God for having withdrawn from me the heavy weight that was dragging

me down into the abyss of sin." Turning up his sleeves and the tail of his coat, he will take the plow with which he is familiar and sing as he goes to work.

152. But what do we see now? When fortune abandons man and need obliges him to earn his living with his own hands, he grows discouraged, and not only he dishonors himself, but he draws misfortune onto all of mankind. Whose fault is it? Yours, because you have hidden and are hiding yet the divine commandment. The government, not the individuals, should be sentenced to the penitentiary. Why so? they ask. Because you should not hide the law of God. Let the responsibility of the crime fall onto the clergy and the Jewish Rabbi, but do not blame the civil and military authority, for it is not in the least guilty!

153. You see it now, reader; all of your books are insignificant by the side of mine. Your eloquent excuses are empty by the side of this simple language. All of your precious works, which you pay each other so generously for, are ignorant by the side of our work. The treasures that fill your houses have no value compared to the bread which we have in our lofts. All of your broad intelligence is weak by the side of our small mind. Your millions are nothing but horrible poverty by the side of our small possessions.

154. During entire centuries people have talked of the rich and of the poor; but no one ever found the difference between those two classes of men, because one owns a small capital, another a capital twice as large, a third a capital three times as large, etc.; and each one pointed to the other: "Do you take me for a rich man? Look at so and so, there is a man who is rich."

It is exactly of such rich men as those that Jesus Christ said: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the

kingdom of God." (S. Mark, X, 25.)

But I have seen that there is between the rich and the poor the same distance that there is between heaven and earth, between east and west. Between us and you there is, it is said, an immense gulf: we can not go to you; you can not come to us. *Is it not so?*

155. If, for instance, I should give to a rich or to a learned man the following advice: "You see that on your side there is nothing but vileness; come to ours. Do not work the bread since you have never done it; but the single fact that you come to us will spare you the intolerable stinging of your conscience." "I can not do it," he would answer, "I would rather die than join you."

156 Would it not be the same on the day of the judgment, as the Scriptures assert it? In His mercy God will receive you; but in your shame you will move away from Him. But still God will not move away from you because you disdained the work of the bread which he prescribed for you, and which you have trampled under foot as well as those who observed it.

157. Your reign has lasted for 7,382 years while we were oblige to work. In 1882 will begin our reign and your period of work, if this commandment is understood by every peasant. What a triumph, what a joy it will be for this, the lower class!

158. If you have then a chance to spend a few days in the country, you would have to borrow the eyes of an animal, for with the eyes of a man, you could not remain. As we will be elevated, so will you be lowered. No one however will blame you openly; you will be fed, but the blame that will arise behind you will touch you more bitterly than if it was spoken to your face.

159. If you earned your bread by working with your hands, and not with money, your reign would be still

more bright. We are now your inferiors. We would be still lower then for we work by constraint, urged on by need, whereas you would work simply to obey the first commandment. You would deserve more respect than ever.

160. You are now occupying our seat at table, in spite of us; and we remain so humbly before you that your conscience suffers as well as ours. But then the real justice would arise triumphant: it will spare you, but it will not injure us. You will not always have the seat of honor and we will not remain eternally at the end of the table.

161. The lazy say to me: "If you had found a way of being rich and happy without working every one would have thanked you. But when you advise us to undertake an irksome and humiliating work, who will take any notice of your words? You wish to convince the government that the primitive law is based on bread labor. But many very learned people can see in the law but a message that is far from plain. And then must we trouble ourselves about the bread? What is the use of writing on a subject that is not worth while? What is the use of even speaking of it, since we can have bread at the rate of twenty or thirty kopeks a measure?

"Lastly if that work was going to lead us to salvation all of the learned and especially the clergy, would hasten to accomplish it. But they disdain it and prefer an easy life: it must be then that it contains nothing that can contribute to our salvation. What you are saying is but a fairy tale."

162. The principal curse of our class, that of the laborers, that which casts us in spite of ourselves into misery, abjection and various other misfortunes, is, it will be said, the division of wealth between brothers. It is

impossible to speak of that evil in two words. The cause of that is still the same: the world has been kept ignorant of the law of work. If that law had been published, a hundred men could live together. The one who commands would have no occasion to be proud, and the ones who obey could not be offended. If, in the midst of that group, a father or a mother happened to die, the children would remain in that surrounding full of cordiality and harmony, and the shock would not be so hard for the one who was bereaved. The orphans would find there mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, in a word, a host of protectors.

Women are generally tender-hearted: they would take care of the orphans in preference to their own children. In a word, every virtue results from that law and it is opposed to all vices. It is not in vain that God said in creating the world: "Let light be, since it is good."* You have hidden that gift of God from the sight of man, and you were whispering to each other: "There are fools who feed us well, give us fine clothes, and all that for nothing. We give them orders and they obey us."

163. If a man speaks of a crime before a numerous society, he names no one as being the author of it, for he can not read in the consciences: he speaks of the crime in a legal way and wounds no one. But if we explain the primitive law: "Knead your bread with the sweat of your brow;" we can not hide the name of the criminal, for he carries on himself, so to say, the brand of Cain.

To disobey that commandment is, in truth, the greatest of crimes, and, if it was committed by a man of the lower class, it might not be noticed; but as the commandment

* Allusion to the text of Genesis: "God created the sun, God put the stars in the firmament to give light to the earth—AND GOD SAW THAT THAT WAS GOOD."

speaks to those who elevate themselves unto the sky, everyone notices those who break it.

164. God gave two commandments to our ancestors Adam and Eve, the first: "Grow and multiply, fill the earth;" the second: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread." Why, I will ask of you first of all, do you hasten to execute the first commandment of God with such eagerness and gluttony, that you try even to multiply the race of your neighbor? Why, I will ask you next, do you disdain the second commandment of God: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread," and do you hide in different corners, saying: "I will take a good workman and he will make my bread."

Then you should take a good workman to make your children.

"But that is inadmissible," you will answer.

If that is inadmissible, then it is also inadmissible to oblige others to make your bread, except in certain excusable cases. Tell me why you do not disdain the first commandment as much as you disdain the second. If your wives had heard your words they would have said: "We are fulfilling our commandment: our children give us pain and sometimes death; and you, why do you avoid executing the commandment that concerns you? Give to your children the bread of your work."* You can answer nothing to that, and you will remain like a fish on the sand.

* Compare these remarks of Bondareff to what Tolstoi exposes in the admirable chapter, "To Women," which ends "What Must Be Done."

That woman who willfully became sterile and who seduces man by the beauty of her shoulders and hair, that one is the woman perverted by man, the woman who lowered herself unto him, unto the perverted

165. How blind you are, O, savant! You pore over the holy Scripture, and you do not see the means by which you could unburden of the weight of sin both yourself and the flock which God entrusted to you. You do not see the road that would lead you directly to eternal life. Your blindness is like that of the inhabitants of Sodoma who were blinded while looking for the door of Loth.†

But those have had their blindness, while you, although blind, you think that you see everything clearly and plainly, that you know everything without the help of any master, and that no one has the right to advise you. Your blindness is like that of Balaam who, from the donkey on which he was perched, did not see the angel of God armed with a sword of fire, standing on the road before him, while the donkey he was riding saw. It is I who am the donkey, and you are Balaam; and you have been riding me since my childhood.

man, who like him, ignores the law, and who, like him, has become blind unto the right meaning of life.

From that fault results the wonderful foolishness that is called the right of women. Here is the formula of that right of women:

"Ah! you, man," said the woman, "you have ignored your real work and you wish that we should carry the entire weight of our work. But no! Since such is the case, we also, like you, can do that supposed work which you accomplish in banquets, in public offices, in universities and academies; we wish also, like you, under the pretext of division of the work, to encroach upon that of others and live only for the satisfaction of our coquetry."

† Allusion to the Genesis, xix:10. "And they followed that man Loth, with violence, and went up to the door to break it in. Then those men held their hands out and they drew Loth in after them, then they closed the door. As to the people who were outside, they struck them with blindness, all of them, large and small, and they tired themselves without finding the door."

166. From all that precedes, one can see plainly, as in a mirror, that man learns to read in order to do, not the good, but the evil. It is not without reason that the proverb says: "If the learned people should lose their eyes" (and I Bondareff, probably, like them,) and if their horses died, the world would but live the better."

I did not use to believe in proverbs, but now I see that it is God who gave them to the world.

167. The world is divided up between a thousand religions, while there should be but one belief, as there is but one God.

The first commandment: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread" can unite all religions into one. When man has understood the full strength of that commandment, he will press it to his heart, and, in a century or less perhaps, he will unite the world from east to west, from north to south, in a single belief, a single church and a single love. (See article 35.)

168. Why do you look at the people who avoid work not only without friendliness, but almost with hatred, I have been asked? Whatever you may have on your heart, you should still speak gently and kindly.

Here is my answer: Where could one find enough patience and hypocrisy to speak gently and kindly? How many millions of people are there, how many have been since the beginning of the world, and how many will there be yet who have been, who are, who will be ignominiously wronged by you, the masters of this world? In such conditions, I do not say a man, but even an angel could not stand such insults, it would make hair raise on his head. And I who am only a man, I have wrongly endured them. Time and again I have wished to speak gently, but when I begin to write

I grow so indignant that I forget all of my resolutions. And I have said to myself that one can die but once. That is why I took the right road and I have now started.

* 169. I am speaking to you, the upper classes. I do not beg of you, I do not ask, but I order that you should give us back what is ours, that you should teach us the primitive law which God himself gave us, the laborers, when he created heaven and earth. You took it from us either by cunning or by violence, and you have hidden it in the depths of the earth, like the lazy slave of the Gospel who hides his coin in a deep hole. Return it to us now without delay, give it back to us! We will no longer accept an excuse.

Those who preceded you were right in keeping that law about them, since they were not asked for it: strangers have nothing to do with other people's goods. But now give us back that law, or, in other words, explain it to us!

170. You all give us the same excuse. It is not I who am guilty, says one; nor I, says another; nor I, says the third, and there is no end to the not I, but who then will say: It is I who am guilty? If one speaks to the supreme chiefs of the state, they will say also: We are not the guilty ones. In a word the universe has suddenly become a circle in which no one is on the circumference and everybody is in the center. Question this one or that one, they will all answer invariably: I am not guilty.

If it was a question of being proud and elevating one's self unto the sky, of riding on the backs of the poor people, you would all cry out: I! I! But it is to hold out your hand to the millions of people who are dying in misery; not I! you say immediately. Who then will answer to my question: I! I! If our emper-

or Alexander Nicolaievitch has delivered us from slavery, it has, according to my view, nothing to do with what we are speaking of: it is another matter.

171. It is evidently necessary to convince people by good advice and by various other warnings, but never by strength. To print that advice in the alphabets and prayer books, to bring the clergy of all nations and all religions, by gentle ways and not by violence, to bring them to preach that doctrine, to be continually reminding their flock of the qualities that are vested, before God and before man, in him who adheres carefully to the primitive law of God, of the faults that characterize on the contrary him who avoids the execution of that commandment: Such are the ways by which, I believe, we should oblige men to work, but not by violence.

But, unless it be the government, who has the power to do what I have said? Nobody.

172. If that advice was inserted in every daily and monthly paper, and in other publications, under different shapes, we might wait as many thousands of years as there are days in a century, it would give no result. (See art. 36.)

173. Implore, O, my soul, (and by my soul I mean the souls of all of the laborers,) implore the government as much as you wish, shed as many tears as you can, raise your voice to its highest pitch, bend your knees as much as you wish, not a soul will be moved by your prayers, no one will notice your tears. I am certain now that my double demand remains useless. If I had but been answered yes or no, I would have been satisfied, but not a word has been said!*

O, Eternal Father, deign to glance down upon the earth!

* Compare these reflections of Bondareff to those of the celebrated sectarian Soutaief. "If the Czar knew!" says Soutaief with a host of

See! there is but one man who, with a single word, can oppress millions of men!†

others. One day he starts for Petersburg; he wishes to WARN THE CZAR. • Useless trouble; he is not allowed to approach. The unfortunate reformer obliged to return to his village accusing himself of having sinned through lack of perseverance.

† Probably an allusion to the czar.

APPENDICES



APPENDICES

TO THE WORK OF BONDAREFF

TOIL AND LOVE---WILL OF BONDAREFF

I

The love of our brothers, that is the principle of the commandments, the commandment of commandments, the law of laws, the virtue of virtues. There is no virtue that is like it either in heaven or on earth. No other has the hundredth part of its perfection; and in speaking thus, I have not the slightest intention of violating the laws and commandments that exist: I simply wish to appreciate love at its true worth

II

And now, I ask you, which is the most useful to man and the most agreeable to God, work or love? It is evidently work. But there is only one work more useful than love, it is that which is accomplished according to the commandment: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread." That is the only work that is more useful and more agreeable to God than love. Outside of that one, all of the others are useless and sometimes even injurious.

III

But it has never happened to any one to work on account of that law, or that commandment, I mean by that not to satisfy the need of food, but to obey the law (for that is how I, Bondareff, explain the expression of the Genesis;) therefore no one knows the joys that result from that work, and, consequently, not one of

you, O my readers, can ratify my assertion when I say that work is more useful to mankind than love.

IV

Here is the proof: I find continually, and in all books, songs of praise in the honor of brotherly love. It is praised by every nation, even by the savages themselves, in every language and in every dialect. It is honored in the proverbs and the sayings; it is made the basis of every religion and civil law. The preachers are tired of singing the praise of love. But, I ask you, have those sermons and praises had any result, given rise to any virtuous actions? Not in the least. It is not solely with love that you can quench the thirst of him who is thirsty, clothe the poor, give alms to the beggars, help the widows and the orphans, etc., etc.

V

If only people helped each other; if they took pity on the misfortunes of others; but no, they steal, they kill, they burn, they destroy, they deceive, hate and

wish each other every possible misfortune; they lay traps and plan ambushes, and, all told, if they did not fear the authority, and there was in the world nothing but sermons, the men would eat each other alive. Such are the actions given rise to by that praise, those sermons on love, and if a man happens to do the good to his brother, it is due to the instinct that binds us together and not to love.

VI

Why is brotherly love not appreciated? My answer will be short: in the first place, love is an excellent virtue, but it is narrow, and, besides that, real work contains love, while love does not imply work. We can add that work was created by God in the Paradise, while love came into this world four thousand years later with Moses. It is now evident why work is the first of all virtues and the basis of every law. Love without work is like a man without a head, it is dead, and is therefore a narrow (derivated) virtue.

VII

To prove still better what I assert, I propose to you to make the following trial: suppress, cross out all of

the texts of the holy Scripture that rest on brotherly love and put in their stead the explanation of this law: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread," and do not speak of love. Spread around those modified texts, and soon, before the end of the day, men will all be induced in spite of themselves, to love their brothers. It is in the bread and in the field work that we must look for brotherly love. And the laborer must endeavor to show the strength of that law, otherwise he is lazy. Idleness, luxury, such are, on the contrary, the principle enemies of social love. But you who have never worked, you have never tasted the delights which are given by the accomplishment of the law and of the work which it demands; that is why not one of you will believe my words. But it is my duty to say them. It rests with you to believe or discard them.

VIII

Therefore I request of you, readers, remember these words and imbed them in your heart: the work done according to the primitive law is the necessary accompaniment of brotherly love. Work is strong without the help of love; it can, unaided, give man the highest prize he can aspire to before God, while love without the help of work is not able to, because, as we have said before, true love, deprived of all hypocritical veil, is hidden in work, but without work love is dead. Love your brothers, respect them, you say to us, but

before that, O you who preach love, are you not eating the bread of his work? Once more, the preachers have exhausted their strength, dried their throats, tired their tongues in preaching love, and what result have they drawn from it? Love exists nowhere.

IX

If love reigned in the world, would the actual state of things exist? In creating heaven and earth, God gave for the eternity to us, the laborers, and not to the lazy who have white hands, an inviolable law, expressed as follows: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread." In that law God included both temporal and eternal happiness.

Since the beginning of the centuries the supreme masters of the laws have taken away from us, either by violence or by cunning, that precious treasure. After having robbed us of it, they probably hid it deep in the earth, like the lazy slave of the Gospel, who buried his coin. During centuries we laborers did not notice our loss. In the midst of the innumerable cares of life we forgot it and it is only to-day that we think of it. The thief is now discovered; we have found the guilty one and unveiled his crimes before the eyes of the universe. But what, you will say to me. Give back the treasure which God gave you. No, I will not. The prey which the wolf hides between his teeth, says the proverb, it is George who gave it to him. What! You preach

brotherly love in every key, and you commit such crimes! Why is it? My question deserves an answer.

X

If love reigned in the world, would 2,400,000 of men have been placed under the authority of the lords, as it could be seen in our country not long ago? If love reigned in the world, would the rich always receive a fertile soil, while men and even children are every day in danger of death, through lack of food? But the lords, masters of the soil which they have appropriated since the creation of the world (that is the origin of the word "property,)" sell it to others at a very high price, then gamble with the money or spend it on I know not what fancies. That shows how deep is brotherly love.

XI

On the sixth day God said: "See, I give you all of the plants bearing seed: feed yourself and sow." Most men do not wish to submit to that commandment, they refuse to sow, and load that irksome work onto the

back of the defenseless poor : as to themselves, they walk around folding their arms and whistling. If at least they had give him but the work of the bread alone ; but they loaded onto him every irksome toil, and he even pays to accomplish it ! I am not speaking of the taxes, but of the contributions of all kinds which he has to make. That is what they impose upon us in the name of the law. Not satisfied with those wrongs, which they have inflicted upon us, they were careful to take the soil away from him. They have made an eternal deposit of it in the hands of those who avoid work, and call by the name of "their property" the soil which they never plowed

Such is the brotherly love which you advise but do not practice.

XII

Time and again I have resolved to show you more affection in my words ; but when I notice your falsehood, I forget all of my oaths.

It is easy to remark between the primitive law of work and the civil and religious laws the eternal enmity that exists between the serpent and the woman. Even between the two classes of men, the laborers on one side and those who avoid work on the other, here exists an enmity created by God himself and not by man. It is said that between the primitive law and the posterior ones there is this difference that the primitive law was

given by God to man as an atonement for his sins ; and each one knows that God did not give us other merits or other virtues to redeem our sins. But, if it is thus, why is work not prescribed by the laws or the traditions as indispensable for the salvation ? That would nearly give us the thought that that decision of God is not just. That is why I said that there was enmity between those two kinds of laws. And, besides that, millions of laborers have lived between Adam's time and our epoch ; has there not been amongst us a single virtuous man, agreeable to God ?

The question is important. But instead of resolving it, the writers, more competent than we are, speak of the progress of work and of laziness without naming any one. It is thus that they have neglected, and always will neglect, until the end of centuries, to speak of the question of work and laziness.

XIII

Here is another argument that proves that work accomplished according to the primitive law is more useful than brotherly love. Speak of that love to an ignorant or a badly educated man, he will not listen to you. You can see it in his eyes and by the expression of his face : he is half asleep, he yawns and is bored. He endeavors to bring the conversation onto another topic, or else he tells you that he is in a hurry, he prepares

to leave, and all that has been said to him he either will not or cannot understand it. It was therefore useless to start that conversation. I have tried the experiment myself, I am not inventing.

XIV

When, reading to such a man a few short texts from the Genesis, you arrive at the words: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread," explain to him that that atonement was inflicted by God for their original sin and for our actual ones. Add that God, in creating heaven and earth, gave us no other means of redeeming our crimes, etc., etc. You will see him look up at you astounded; he will forget his drowsiness and ennui, he will even forget that he is expected at home. Then he will look down, troubled by those truths which he never heard of, and of the use he made of his youth, without thinking of the trouble God might have in store for him.

I know, readers, that you will not believe my words. But, I swear it before God, I have said the truth.

XV

He will then look up and show by that that the argument has done its work. Then he will ask questions

and continually bring the conversation back to that topic. Lastly, he will tell his friends what he has learned, they will tell it to theirs, and so on. Why would he not listen when you spoke of love? There is something mysterious there.

XVI

Note, however, that the workingmen alone, the laborers, will approve of your words. As to those who avoid work, and they are numerous in your surroundings, they will discuss your arguments word by word, and contradict them; and, as main argument in the discussion that is so repulsive to them, they will show you the money which they take from the poor peasants and which they pretend to use to help them. You know very well, readers, that the rich is always triumphant in every discussion. It has always been so in the history of humanity, and it always will be until the end of the centuries, as asserts Sidrach, that man inspired by God: "When the rich man speaks all are silent, and they extol his words unto the sky. But the poor man speaks, and they say, "who is that one?"

XVII

Have I not proved irrefutably that love without work is dead and that work accomplished according to the law,

unaided by love, is alone alive? Because love is hidden in the work: the work is the house in which love dwells. Love without work is a body without a soul. The law is living only when its power is profitable to man, otherwise it is dead. And then that law lives, but only for those who accomplish it willingly, and not for those who refuse to submit their entire soul to it, who refuse to work. Last of all, the lazy, real criminals, are dead to the law, just as it is dead to them.

As to brotherly love, we have not to speak of it here.

It is impossible to explain to the world the law of work which I taught myself without any outside help. I have felt its truth all through my being. You are not aware, and you never will be, that it is so powerful that it can, in a few days, chain up all mankind in one belief, in one church, in one love, because it is the principle of all virtues. It would be well for you, O you of the upper classes, if you held in your hands the head of virtue, but you hold its tail, and it is "love" that I mean when I say "tail." Love gives you words and not actions. Why is it? Because gold has blinded you and you cannot tell the head from the tail.

XVIII

Can you believe, readers, that he who has welcomed the law of work with as much delight as I have just shown you, would do to others what he would not have

done to him? Would he take, by any means, the goods of others? Can one suppose that, having decided to eat the bread work by his own hands and to lead an honest life, he could keep about him what he has acquired dishonestly? No, it is too inconsequent to be conceived of.

Do you think that a man whose conscience is so pure could prevent himself from holding out a helping hand to his brothers, or, in other words, see a hungry man and not feed him, see a thirsty man and not quench his thirst, see a tired traveler and not call him into his house, etc., etc.? A pure conscience has the eyes of an angel and not those of a man: nothing escapes them.

XIX

For him who has not tasted the delight of the work accomplished according to the primitive law which God himself gave us on creating heaven and earth, it is hard, very hard, even to believe what I have said. But in saying that the work blessed by God is a hundred times more useful than love, I am only making use of the right which belongs to me. It is for you to approve or blame my opinions. And as to judging which of us is right, God alone and the czar have that right.

XX

My readers must say or at least think: "How is that? The entire universe and the highest authority

are based on brotherly love, like a mountain on the rocks for the world knows of no virtue that is higher than love. But alas! the edifice is suddenly crumbling, for its foundations have been sapped there and there; in a word, brotherly love is dead. Love is the last and not the first of virtues. If we eat other people's bread without having a good reason for it, if in that we disobey the primitive law, love is then a useless virtue. "But," some readers will say, "we had vested our hope in money, as in God, supposing that we would find in that the temporal and eternal salvation; but that Bondareff does not respect money and demands personal work. Shall we tell him that he lies? But we have no solid basis for the assertion." The inconstant fortune of man rests always on a tottering throne, and it knows not on which side it will fall. When the time comes, at which your fortune disappears, my readers will say that the proverb is right: "Thunder does not always come from clouds, but often from a heap of refuse."

XXI

Just as the universe cannot live without God, likewise it cannot live without bread and without laborers. It is evident that the laborer takes the third place after God and the bread: it is on that triple foundation that rests the world, as we will show plainly in the following articles:

XXII

God is a ubiquitous spirit, in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth. But which is his principal dwelling? Question which has not been solved up to our time. But now it is evident that no reasonable man is in doubt as to the main dwelling of God, which is the bread and the laborer. Deduct one of those three terms, God, the bread or the laborer, and soon the universe will disappear.

XXIII

Can we not assert now that this second trinity saves really our souls from death? We would not even commit a sin in calling it the first trinity because the first trinity formed by the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, is open to criticism. One half of the universe recognizes it, while the other does not, and sees in God a single person. If the whole universe had recognized this trinity of which I have just spoken, and which is composed of God, the bread and

the laborer, it would probably be admitted that those three persons are contained in God.

XXIV

And now, readers, what do you think of what would happen if all of the laborers understood my words? They would not fly away above the clouds, they would not hasten to take to themselves other work and other virtues. By the work of the soil they would enrich themselves, and, moreover, they would enrich you. You certainly know that all of your delights depend upon our work: without it you would not be happy. But what can be done to make those men continue their work? It is impossible to keep them where they are. Ah! pity the misfortune of that laborer who sows good seed on a sterile soil and has nothing to reap! I am that laborer; the good seed is the first commandment of God with its consequences; the sterile soil is your heart which, in the midst of the comforts of this world, turns away in disgust from the work which God imposed upon all of us.

XXV

I return to what I was saying. If God is especially present in the bread and in the laborer, it seems to me

that there would be a good reason for honoring the bread as the true God, and the laborer as one of the most precious of the creatures of heaven and earth. (I am not speaking for myself; at my age a man has outgrown ambition.) To-day the price of the bread is of one rouble and forty kopeks a measure, while no price can be assigned to it by the human mind! Once more, it should not be sold, but given in extraordinary circumstances. Bread is valued at one rouble and forty kopeks, and the laborer is valued still less than that. He is an naught And still he is one of the three persons of that indivisible trinity that saves us from death.

XXVI

God might, I admit it, feed man without needing the bread and laborer; but to do that he would be obliged to change the whole order of nature, and to withdraw the word which he pronounced in creating heaven and earth: - "Let heaven and earth be." He would have to destroy all that in order to modify his laws. But for whom should he change the order of the world? For the lazy? No, no. I repeat it: God, the bread and the laborer, that is the real and indivisible trinity, that which saves us from death.

XXVII

It is for me to ask whether a thing is useful or not for the good of all; it is for you to answer or not answer.

Why then is the laborer called a fool and an idiot, he who eats the bread of his work and prevents the other men and the animals from starving to death ; why is his merit ignored to such an extent ? We are fools ; I admit it, fools in all the strength of the word. But listen : the more one learns the more one progresses ; but it is impossible to reach the limit of progress—perfection. As long as his life lasts, man does not reach the end of his science, and it is only after death that he reaches perfection with a single step.

XXVIII

Besides that, the more you learn, the better you can see your intellectual faults. Since then you lower, as much as you can, that man who feeds himself with his work and feeds his brothers at the same time, as well as the animals, what name will you apply then to the one who, far from feeding the others, lives lazily on the result of their work, and, what is worse still, sucks the blood of the poor in order to get money ? What will you call him ? A brigand ? No ; a brigand comes under the scope of the law, while that one is respected and honored. All of the humiliating epithets you have applied them to us, which is the one then that can be applied to the lazy ? But what is the use of questioning you ? A stone might answer me, but you, readers, you will not.

XXIX

If a great famine rages for a year only in Russia, every one will die of hunger. But where is the wheat that

had been left over from the preceding years and which the "fools" had accumulated? "The intelligent people have eaten it," you will answer. Can one believe that an intelligent man dared to commit such a crime? Eat the bread that belongs to the ignorant, trample brotherly love under foot as well as the primitive commandment; it is almost incredible.

XXX

The love of bread is the strongest instinct of man, and still what he disdains the most is the bread-labor.

There are actually in Russia millions of children who are being taught to read, that they may more easily set that work aside and eat bread for nothing, that they may ride on the backs of the laborers. If that was not their intention, they would never consent to learn and their parents would not send them to school. To wish not to live without doing anything, that would be a crime, a suicide! He will therefore not work, that condition is too shameful.

Whence comes that state of things? From the fact that the divine law: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread," has not been explained to the young and intelligent souls, and from the fact that no place has been reserved for it in the books of science. For that is how men would have understood from their very youth that they must try to eat the bread of their own work and live honestly.

XXXI

Work, the virtue of virtues, is mentioned neither in the alphabets nor in the books of high science. The teachers never allude to it, because they lead themselves an idle life. The child can therefore learn nothing good in the schools. He will be like the earthenware that always retains the odor of the first liquid that was put into it. How many examples prove it! The historians tell that the Roman emperor, Caligula, was so cruel, that, not satisfied with taking the life of those who displeased him, he would even drink the blood of his victims. The daughter of Darius liked nothing better than snake. How can one explain those facts? Caligula had been brought up by a cruel woman; the daughter of Darius had had for nurse a woman whose favorite food was snake.

XXXII

The theologians pretend that God offers the milk of wisdom as food for children and that the devil offers them the milk of impiety. If, through the fault of the parents, the child drinks the milk of the devil, no other

food will please him afterwards, just as Caligula liked blood and the daughter of Darius was fond of snakes.

In that case what can the laborers hope for? Let us always expect the worst. But if the men learn to read and write, who will feed them? That is an important problem which nobody is willing to solve.

XXXIII

I request you, readers, not to forget that I asked to you humbly with bowed head, standing sadly on the threshold of your door. But you are occupying the seat of honor at the table covered with the results of our work. You will not answer me? Why is it, unless because you see that you are in every way guilty before God, before man and before yourself, which means your conscience. If you tried to justify yourself you would fall still deeper into sin; if you tried to contradict me, your obstinacy would be an outrage, not against me, but against God, against bread and against your conscience.

XXXIV

You see now, upper classes, that the laborer is your second father, we can even say, without fear of sinning,

that he is your first father. Remember that all you eat at table results from our work. In a word, we feed you as a father feeds his children.

Nothing more contrary to the law than the excuse you give by saying: "I pay for the bread."* But where did you get the money? That money which you keep near you, is it not the fruit of our labor? You could only win our forgiveness by a willing consent to eat the bread of your own work. "It is impossible," you will answer again, "how could all men do the same work?"

XXXV

The law of work is incomprehensible if it is compared with love, because the single word Love suffices alone to explain all of the mysteries, while it takes numerous developments to render perfectly plain the meaning of the primitive law. I have already written nearly 300 articles to discuss it, and I doubt whether I have entirely convinced my readers of the necessity of the work. How can one present in a few words the virtue which is attached to the law which God gave when he created heaven and earth! And then the greatest of curses, the obstacle that takes all of its

* I mean by "I" all of our class, men, women and children. I am not speaking in my own name, but in the name of all of my companions.

strength from that law, is money. It is money that blinds man and makes him insane. Listen to them answer simply: "I pay for the bread, I pay for the bread." That is their only answer. Is it then possible to discuss with them?

XXXVI

It is time to end my discourse or rather my sermon.

At the time at which I am writing the government has not yet thought of the law of work. No rescript has explained its strength; it has not preached to its subjects the love of work in spite of the pressing requests which I addressed to it and which it has not noticed. How I pity its blindness! God is witness that I am telling the truth. The individual is excusable if he is not aware of certain things: but is it admissible that the government should hide from the people the greatest happiness that exists in heaven and on earth? I think not.

XXXVII

I have just learned this minute that the censors will not allow the publication of my sermon. Why? 1st,

Because the authority wishes also to avoid the horrible bread labor ; 2nd, Because it hates us who feed it. "Let them suffer with hunger and cold, those sixty millions of laborers, as long as we and our equals are happy !" And if you speak to them of brotherly love, they will show themselves greater philanthropists than you are ; but always words, never actions !

XXXVIII

The state I have spoken of has existed for five years already. Before one of you we are like sparrows before an eagle.

With a single word, with a single stroke of his pen he can crush us ; and he has really crushed and annihilated us. What millions of men he has oppressed ! I was saying that, thanks to the government, laziness will blossom and grow everywhere ; the work and the bread will be lowered and despised. It is done. You see what truth there is in my predictions and what exactitude in my words !

XXXIX

The blood and tears of men have attested to the truth of all of the commandments in the Old and the New

Testament. But in favor of the primitive commandment which is the principal of all others and of brotherly love, no one ever shed a tear or a drop of blood : no one has attested its truth. That is why it has always been looked upon as false ; that is why nobody recognizes it in the universe ; that is why it is rejected with anger as the censors have just prove. Did Jesus Christ assert it by his death? No. He said in the Gospel: "Look at the birds of the sky, etc." That shows that Jesus rejected like all others the law of work, because from his very childhood he had seen no virtue in it, and that he considered it even the greatest of misfortunes.

XL

It is seen from all that precedes that heaven intended me to attest of the truth of that law and prove it with my blood and my tears. My blood dries in my veins at the sight of the corruption of the world ; as to tears, they fall not from my eyes (a too powerful constitution prevents me from weeping,) but they fall from my heart.

XLI

I wonder myself why I put such ardor in developing the meaning of the primitive commandment in the

midst of all the cares and troubles that surround a peasant such as I am. Will the world be grateful to me for all the pain I have endured? Will I receive for my discovery, which interests the whole world, a reward similar to those distributed to the inventors of trifles? It is useless even to think of it. My greatest reward will be to avoid punishment: for I am making sharp attacks. But against whom are they directed? Think over that important question. Why should those threats trouble me, while I am feeling an invisible and mysterious hand that pushes me forward on the road I am following, and that it is really in spite of myself that I work?

XLII

I used to hope that this work would win for me a reward from God in the future life, although I have not accomplished it willingly. But now very learned men, knowing the goal I am aiming at, come and say to me: "You have not worked through love for your brothers, but through love for yourself. To love your brothers and love yourself at the same time, it is to offend God and hate your brothers." Their arguments seemed to be the pure and simple truth; one would think that God himself inspired them.

XLIII

To avoid all of these difficulties, I see but one way: If my work is divided into ten parts and I am only

credited with the tenth part, I will be satisfied. If even that was taken from me, I would not be injured, for I am convinced that in the next life I will not need to be judged by God. My conscience will be my judge, and it will not torture me with remorse, because I have always tried to act righteously. Still, if there are any doubtful cases, I will submit to the appreciation of God.

XLIV

The readers will perhaps want to know the sorrows that dried my blood. Here they are :

1. I am not accustomed to writing, as you can see by my style. I have been obliged to write the same article over several times. One can judge of the work I have had.

2. I composed this sermon in the midst of the irksome work of the country : I go to the fields during the day, and, in the evening, I write with difficulty, because I see badly, even with glasses.

3. If I had been rich, I would have had assistants, preceptors, advisers. But, although I am not entirely poor, my possessions are very modest. That is why I was very badly welcomed every time I spoke of my plan.

4. Is my family large, in other words, how many people are there who are working in my house? There

are seven of us: myself, my wife, my eldest son and his wife, and three little children. We are far from being all able to work.

Our fortune does not allow us to take workmen, and then, as I have just said, we should not eat the bread prepared by the work of others.

5. For the last four years (we are in December, 1886,) I have been addressing requests to the government in which I express all that I have in my heart. I have asked for permission to publish my sermon. What has been the result? I must have addressed myself to blind and deaf people: they did not answer. If at least they had but said "Yes" or "No."

6. Lastly, what has dried my blood more than all is that sixty millions of Russians are suffering and in misery because they are not aware of the law of the work. Why? In order that some may live in comfort and laziness and enjoy every earthly pleasure, and they are such that I do not want to speak of them before honest people.

Have I exposed all of my troubles and cares, all the pain and anguish that I suffer? No, for it is impossible to tell all.

XLV

Nothing is more true: heaven had designed me to seal with my blood and wash with my tears the truth which I preach. I have sealed it with my blood and washed it with my tears. Perhaps after my death

the commandment which I proclaimed will blossom. No, I cannot believe that it will be otherwise. What is the obstacle that could oppose its way? I have said the truth : my prophecy will not vanish without leaving any traces. Am I trying to acquire glory? No. I am too old, and what good would it do me? To-day or to-morrow I will fall into my dark tomb, closed to the light of the sun : what good would it do me then to seek for glory?

XLVI

My work is now done. I have drawn the primitive law from the hell where men had cast it in the beginning of the centuries. I have bathed it with my tears and sealed it with my blood, as I have just said, and I have given it into the hands of the most powerful man in the world ; I have given it to the czar of czars, to the monarch of monarchs, to the king of kings, to the emperor.

Whatever may happen, I have done my duty. It is for you, O czar, to act according to your power and according to your will.

XLVII

One word more, and I am through. During the few days of life that remain for me, I will put myself in the

tomb, and I will raise above it a monument in harmony with the primitive law: "With the sweat of your brow, knead your bread." I will build a monument worthy of that precept more precious than all of the earthly treasures. I will expose my design in the following articles.

XLVIII

I will make, I, Bondareff, a will, written, and not verbal, in which I will say to my son Daniel: "At my death, when you lay me in the coffin, you will put these papers in my hands. God, who sees everything, the surface of the earth and its depths, will know why I hold these papers in my hands. He may judge of the contents when he will call, on the day of judgment, all of our enemies who, having read my doctrine, made no effort to propagate it. He will also call up the protectors of the law of work, and he will reward them." I assure you with all my soul that my prophecy will be accomplished. If you offend a man you will certainly be punished. In denying the law of the work you are offending millions of men and their children and all of their descendants. Do you think that your sin will be remitted on account of that blind fortune who protects you? An atheist alone could be in doubt about it.

XLIX

With us it is customary for men to carry the dead to the cemetery. But I will order my son to carry my

body on a chariot as far as the tomb. Man is too great a hypocrite, he shall not touch my remains. Let one of us try to win during his life the respect of his neighbor, he will get nothing but hatred; the greatest misfortunes are called down upon his head and he is disdained; but as soon as he is dead, he has no longer any need for the respect of man, and his enemies carry him to his last resting place, pretending to weep. Ah! if that man could see what is happening at his funeral, he would hardly be satisfied. Man is a hypocrite. I now hate all of mankind, and that is why I will not have them touch my coffin after I am dead.

My criticisms, at times too cutting, were not addressed to individuals who were powerless, but simply to the representatives of the supreme government. These are the worst of our enemies. They are preachers who only feed themselves and allow the flock which God entrusted to them to die of starvation.

L

If a man passed from death to life, his neighbor would not even carry him to a chariot; but when he passes from life to death, he carries him on his arms! And if there should be an occasion of bringing one from death back to life, it would not be done through brotherly love, but in the hope of winning a reward, consisting either in money or public praise.

LI

I will order my son not to bury me in the cemetery, but in the soil which, worked by my own arms, has given me my daily bread. * I will ask him not to fill my tomb with clay or sand, but with fertile earth; not to make a mound, but to leave it so that nothing will show the place where I am buried. And lastly I will advise him to continue to sow every year at that spot the wheat I have lived on. Later the ground may belong to some one else and in that way, until the end of the centuries, the bread of life will be gathered over my tomb.

It is thus that will be accomplished the prophecy of Job: "You will enter the sepulchre in your old age, like the ripe wheat or like the sheaves are stored away in their time."† Such is the monument which I prefer to your thousands of monuments. From this very minute I choose the spot of my tomb; I stretch myself out in the ditch. I am alive to-day—but the future does not belong to us.

* One of the most famous Russian sectarians, the inspirer of Tolstoi, the moujik Soutaief, promises also to dispense with the ministry of the priest, and to be buried in profane ground, but for other reasons than Bondareff. "A grandson is born to him, he refuses to let it be baptised; another one dies, he wishes to bury it in his garden under the pretext that all earth is holy: and, as he is forbidden to, he hides the body under the floor. He marries his daughter himself, etc.—"

† The men will tell of my funeral from century to century and many laborers will follow my example. Some of you, O noble, O

Here I end my book.

And now, readers, good-bye, until our next meeting, if not in this world, at least, in the other. But I hope that through your eloquence and skill you will justify yourself better before God than I could do.

TIMOTHY MICHAILOVITCH BONDAREFF.

wealthy people, may wish also to be buried in the ground where man sows the bread.



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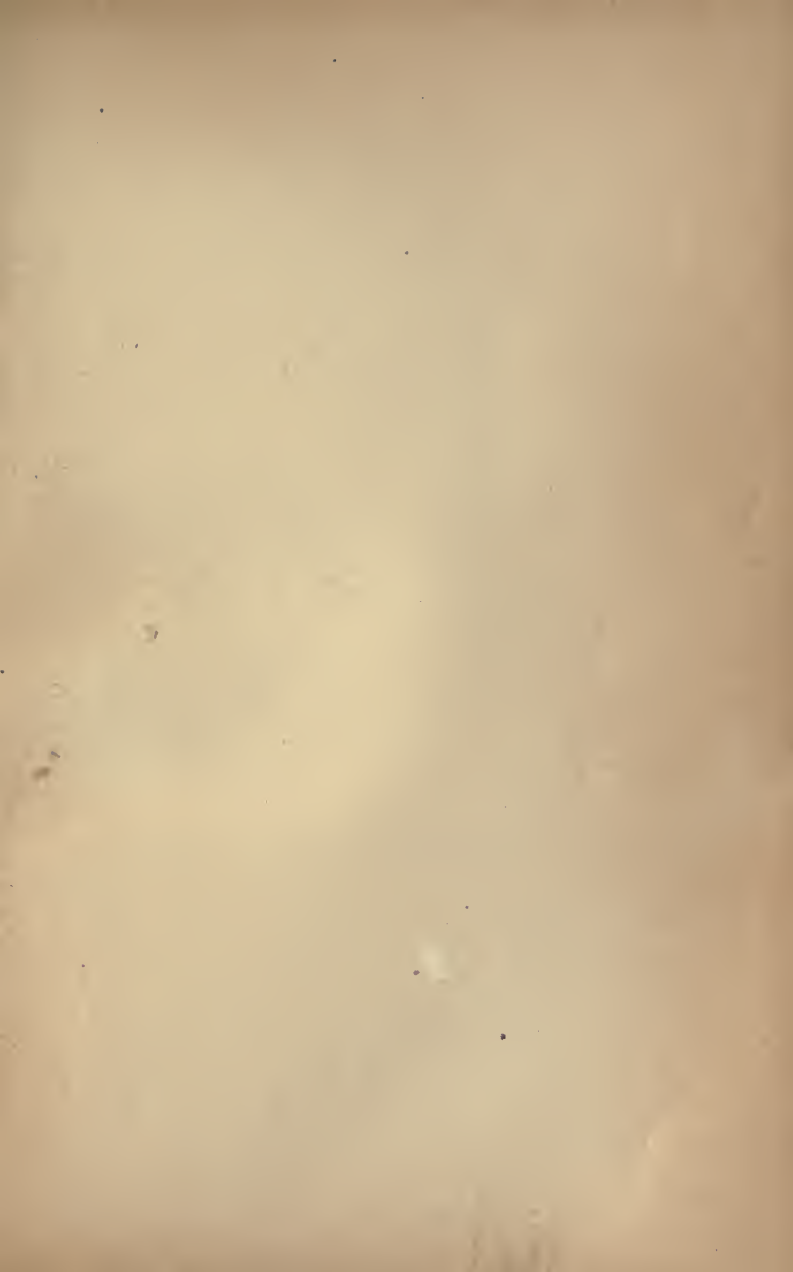
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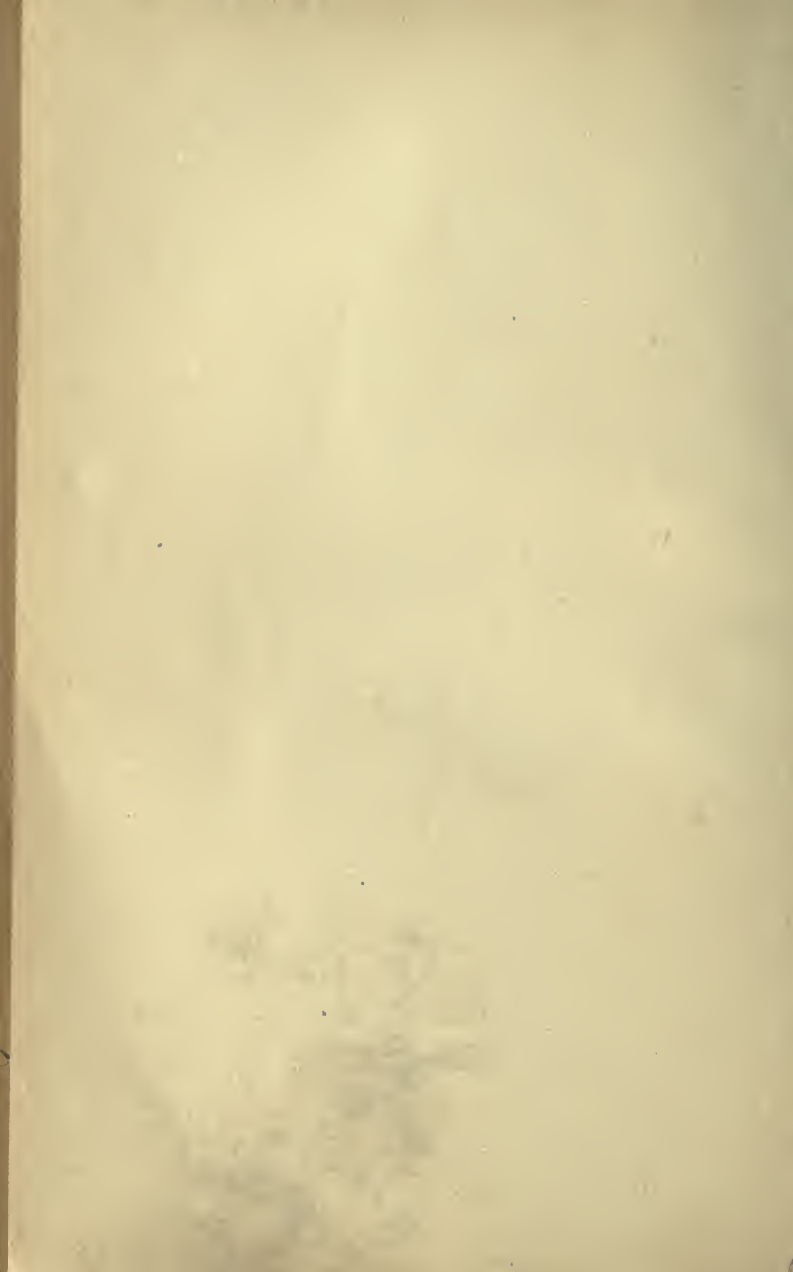
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